



MARY QUEEN OF SCOTS.

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BEING

READINGS FROM THE ABBOT

BY

SIR WALTER ~~SCOTT~~

WITH ~~NOTES~~

LONDON

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PREFACE

This Reading-book has been prepared for the use of schools, in the belief that the perusal of such an interesting narrative as is here presented, from the pen of one of the greatest and most popular of English writers, must necessarily foster a taste for reading and for good literature. *The Abbot* is not as a whole one of Sir Walter Scott's best works, but the portions of it here given are quite worthy of his reputation. Mary Queen of Scots is here painted to the life, and though the novelist has had recourse to his imagination for minor facts and details, the picture in its great features must be considered as true to history. The narrative in describing Mary's captivity in Lochleven Castle, her escape thence, and her flight to England, deals with a most striking episode in the history of Scotland, and this was indeed what mainly led to its being selected for the present purpose. Though but a portion of another work, it will be found to be complete in itself—more especially when read in connection with the introductory and explanatory paragraphs, supplementary to the text.

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH OF SCOTT.

SIR WALTER SCOTT was born in Edinburgh on August 15th, 1771. His father—also called Walter—was a lawyer of the class known as Writers to the Signet; and his mother, Anne Rutherford, was the daughter of an eminent Edinburgh physician and professor. Owing to a fever which young Walter had when an infant he was rendered permanently lame, though his constitution was naturally robust. At the age of eight he entered the Edinburgh High School, where he remained till 1783. During this time he by no means distinguished himself in his class, but he was a great favourite among his fellows in the playground, on account of his powers as a story-teller. At the age of twelve he was transferred from the High School to the University, where he remained three years, till 1786. During this time he took great delight in such writers as Spenser, Boccaccio, and Froissart. He was a fair Latin scholar, but in after years he bitterly regretted that he had neglected to store his mind with a sound knowledge of Greek.

His father wishing him to adopt the law as his profession, Walter was apprenticed in his father's office for six years; after which he was called to the bar as an advocate in 1792. In 1797 he married the daughter of a French lady named Charpentier (or Carpenter), who had fled from the troubles of the French Revolution. He was appointed sheriff of Selkirk in 1799, and in 1804 he went to live at Ashiestiel on the Tweed, where he chiefly resided for nearly eight years.

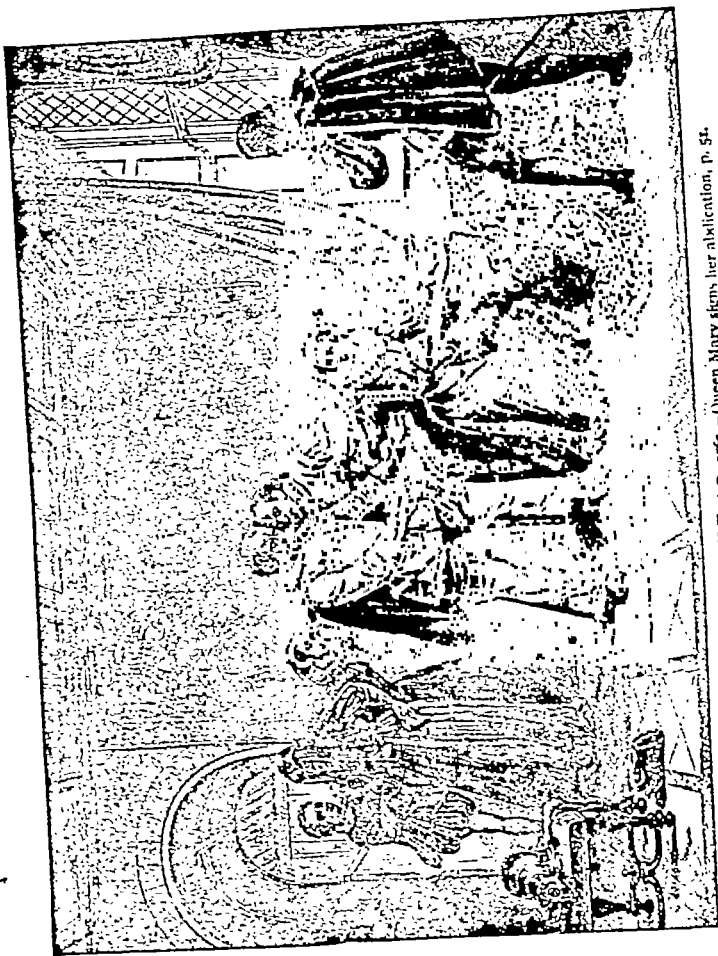
Scott's literary career commences with the year 1796, when he published translations of Bürger's German ballads *Lenore* and *The Wild Huntsman*. In 1802 appeared the *Border Minstrelsy*, a collection of ballads, chiefly old, with others by himself. In 1805 his first great poem, *The Lay of the Last Min-*

strel, was published, and in 1808 followed *Marmion*, both poems attaining great popularity. It is said that Scott received £1000 from his publisher for *Marmion* before he had written a line. In 1810 he published *The Lady of the Lake*. These are generally considered the three best of his longer poems.

In 1812 he removed to Abbotsford, having some years previously received the valuable post of principal clerk to the Court of Session. Up to this time the author was known to the world chiefly as a poet; but a power greater than he was aware of had lain all this time sleeping in his brain, and he now came forward as an incomparable novelist, though for years his works were all anonymous.

In 1814 appeared *Waverley, or 'Tis Sixty Years Since*, the first of the series so well known as the "Waverley Novels." Its success was immediate and remarkable, and it was followed by *Guy Monnering* in 1815, *The Antiquary* in 1816, *Rob Roy* in 1817, and by other romances for a succession of years. The MSS. were copied by one of the Ballantynes (in whose printing concern Scott had for many years been a partner), and to the public the author was quite unknown. In 1820 Scott accepted the offer of a baronetcy. In 1826 he became a bankrupt, being involved in the failure of the firm of Ballantyne & Co. The author now found himself liable for £150,000, and he immediately set to work to discharge the debt by his pen. Under this herculean task he ultimately broke down, and died at Abbotsford in 1832. His creditors had been partly paid by this time, and by the profits of his works after his death they were ultimately paid in full.

Regarding Scott as a poet and writer of fiction combined, he must be reckoned beyond question the greatest man of letters of the present century. Hardly any literary reputation ever rose so high, no reputation ever spread so wide. As a novelist he is generally accorded the highest rank.



ROOM IN LOCHLEVEN CASTLE, A.D. 1569.—Queen Mary signs her abdication, p. 54.

MARY QUEEN OF SCOTS:

READINGS FROM THE ABBOT.

[The following extracts from Sir Walter Scott's historical romance of *The Abbot* give an interesting picture of Queen Mary's residence as a prisoner in Lochleven Castle, and her escape therefrom, as well as of her flight from Scotland to England after the battle of Langside. Mary, it may be remembered, had at this time (1567-1568) alienated from her the minds of the great majority of her subjects, both by her resolute adherence to the Roman Catholic religion, and more especially by her marriage with Bothwell two or three months after the murder of her husband Darnley (unworthy though he was)—a crime in which Bothwell was chief actor, and to which Mary was herself generally believed to be at least a consenting party. The result was that a strong body of the nobles rose in rebellion, defeated the royal troops under Bothwell at Carberry Hill, forced Bothwell to leave the kingdom, and placed the queen in confinement in the well-known castle on a small island in Lochleven; after which followed her compulsory abdication, and the appointment of her half-brother, the Earl of Murray, as regent. Of course the account here given is to be regarded only as generally true to history—not in all its particulars; for of the incidents connected with Queen Mary's ten months' stay in the old castle little is really known. Yet of what is known, or has been generally circulated by tradition of this period of her life, Sir Walter Scott has skilfully availed himself, and most of the incidents detailed below are at least based on stories that may be read in the larger histories of Scotland. Roland Græme of Scott's tale answers to the Willy Douglas, or "the little Douglas" of history (his exact connection with the family is not known), by whose assistance Mary did actually escape, after an attempt by George Douglas to release her had miscarried. Roland Græme is really the hero of the story, though it derives its title from the part played in it by Father Ambrose, abbot of St. Mary's,

Kennaquhair, by whom Roland was secretly instructed in the tenets of the Roman Catholic Church while he was brought up as a page in the castle of Avenel. Roland during the greater part of the story remains a youth of unknown birth, saved from drowning in the lake of Avenel, and with no known relative but his old grandmother, Magdalen Græme. Shortly before the period at which our extracts begin he had left Avenel, had been introduced to Catherine Seyton, under somewhat romantic circumstances, and had gone to Edinburgh in the retinue of Sir Halbert Glendinning, the knight of Avenel, brother of Father Ambrose (Edward Glendinning), but himself a Protestant. At Edinburgh he had rendered assistance to the Lord Seyton in a street fray; and at the hostelry of St. Michael's there had received, as he thought, from Catherine Seyton, disguised in the habit of a page, but really from her twin brother, a sword that he was not to draw till commanded by his rightful sovereign. Having been introduced to the Earl of Murray he was informed that he was about to enter into the service of his queen. The regent explained to him that all that was required of him was fidelity, *i.e.* fidelity to him and to the state. "You are," said he, "to watch every attempt which is made to open any communication with any of the lords who have become banders in the west—with Hamilton, Seyton, with Fleming, or the like." Roland was then told that he was to join the company of Lord Lindesay, with whom and Sir Robert Melville he travelled till the party reached the shore of Lochleven.]

I.

The ancient castle, which occupies an island nearly in the centre of the lake, recalled to the page that of Avenel, in which he had been nurtured. But the lake was much larger, and adorned with several islets besides that on which the fortress was situated; and instead of being embosomed in hills like that of Avenel, had upon the southern side only a splendid mountainous screen, being the descent of one of the Lomond hills, and on the other was surrounded by the extensive and fertile plain of Kinross. Roland Græme looked with some degree of dismay on the water-girdled fortress, which then, as now,

consisted only of one large donjon-keep, surrounded with a court-yard, with two round flanking-towers at the angles, which contained within its circuit some other buildings of inferior importance. A few old trees, clustered together near the castle, gave some relief to the air of desolate seclusion; but yet the page, while he gazed upon a building so sequestered, could not but feel for the situation of a captive Princess doomed to dwell there, as well as for his own. "I must have been born," he thought, "under the star that presides over ladies and lakes of water, for I cannot by any means escape from the service of the one, or from dwelling in the other. But if they allow me not the fair freedom of my sport and exercise, they shall find it as hard to confine a wild-drake, as a youth who can swim like one."

The band had now reached the edge of the water, and one of the party advancing displayed Lord Lindesay's pennon, waving it repeatedly to and fro, while that Baron himself blew a clamorous blast on his bugle. A banner was presently displayed from the roof of the castle in reply to these signals, and one or two figures were seen busied as if unmooring a boat which lay close to the islet.

"It will be some time ere they can reach us with the boat," said the companion of the Lord Lindesay; "should we not do well to proceed to the town and array ourselves in some better order, ere we appear before—"

"You may do as you list, Sir Robert," replied Lindesay, "I have neither time nor temper to waste on such vanities. She has cost me many a hard ride, and must not now take offence at the threadbare cloak and soiled doublet that I am arrayed in. It is the livery to which she has brought all Scotland."

"Do not speak so harshly," said Sir Robert; "if she

hath done wrong, she hath dearly abied it; and in losing all real power, one would not deprive her of the little external homage due at once to a lady and a princess."

"I say to you once more, Sir Robert Melville," replied Lindesay, "do as you will—for me, I am now too old to dink myself as a gallant to grace the bower of dames."

"The bower of dames, my lord!" said Melville, looking at the rude old tower—"is it yon dark and grated castle, the prison of a captive Queen, to which you give so gay a name?"

"Name it as you list," replied Lindesay; "had the Regent desired to send an envoy capable to speak to a captive Queen, there are many gallants in his court who would have courted the occasion to make speeches out of Amadis of Gaul, or the Mirror of Knighthood. But when he sent blunt old Lindesay he knew he would speak to a misguided woman as her former misdoings and her present state render necessary. I sought not this employment—it has been thrust upon me; and I will not cumber myself with more form in the discharge of it than needs must be tacked to such an occupation."

So saying, Lord Lindesay threw himself from horseback, and, wrapping his riding cloak around him, lay down at lazy length upon the sward to await the arrival of the boat, which was now seen rowing from the castle towards the shore. Sir Robert Melville, who had also dismounted, walked at short turns to and fro upon the bank, his arms crossed on his breast, often looking to the castle, and displaying in his countenance a mixture of sorrow and of anxiety. The rest of the party sat like statues on horseback, without moving so much as the points of their lances, which they held upright in the air.

As soon as the boat approached a rude quay or landing-place, near to which they had stationed themselves, Lord

Lindesay started up from his recumbent posture and asked the person who steered why he had not brought a larger boat with him to transport his retinue.

"So please you," replied the boatman, "because it is the order of our lady that we bring not to the castle more than four persons."

"Thy lady is a wise woman," said Lindesay, "to suspect me of treachery!—Or, had I intended it, what was to hinder us from throwing you and your comrades into the lake, and filling the boat with my own fellows?"

The steersman, on hearing this, made a hasty signal to his men to back their oars and hold off from the shore which they were approaching.

"Why, thou ass," said Lindesay, "thou didst not think that I meant thy fool's head serious harm? Hark thee, friend—with fewer than three servants I will go no whither—Sir Robert Melville will require at least the attendance of one domestic; and it will be at your peril and your lady's to refuse us admission, come hither as we are on matters of great national concern."

The steersman answered with firmness, but with great civility of expression, that his orders were positive to bring no more than four into the island, but he offered to row back to obtain a revisal of his orders. *Change*

"Do so, my friend," said Sir Robert Melville, after he had in vain endeavoured to persuade his stubborn companion to consent to a temporary abatement of his train, "row back to the castle, sith it will be no better, and obtain thy lady's orders to transport the Lord Lindesay, myself, and our retinue hither."

"And hearken," said Lord Lindesay, "take with you this page, who comes as an attendant on your lady's guest.—Dismount, sirrah," said he, addressing Roland, "and embark with them in that boat."

"And what is to become of my horse?" said Græme; "I am answerable for him to my master."

"I will relieve you of the charge," said Lindesay; "thou wilt have little enough to do with horse, saddle, or bridle for ten years to come—Thou mayst take the halter an thou wilt—it may stand thee in a turn."

"If I thought so," said Roland—but he was interrupted by Sir Robert Melville, who said to him good-humouredly, "Dispute it not, young friend—resistance can do no good, but may well run thee into danger."

Roland Græme felt the justice of what he said, and, though neither delighted with the matter or manner of Lindesay's address, deemed it best to submit to necessity and to embark without further remonstrance. The men plied their oars. The quay, with the party of horse stationed near it, receded from the page's eyes—the castle and the islet seemed to draw near in the same proportion, and in a brief space he landed under the shadow of a huge old tree which overhung the landing place. The steersman and Græme leaped ashore; the boatmen remained lying on their oars ready for further service.

II.

At the gate of the court-yard of Lochleven appeared the stately form of the Lady of Lochleven, the mother of the celebrated Regent Murray, an illegitimate son of James V. Subsequently, she married Sir William Douglas, of Lochleven. She had adopted uncommonly rigid and severe views of religion, imitating in her ideas of reformed faith the very worst errors of the Catholics, in limiting the benefit of the gospel to those who profess their own speculative tenets.

In every respect the unfortunate Queen Mary, now

the compulsory guest, or rather prisoner, of this sullen lady, was obnoxious to her hostess. Lady Lochleven disliked her as the daughter of Mary of Guise, and as the professor of a religion which she detested worse than Paganism. *fellow* *noted*

Such was the dame, who, with stately mien and sharp yet handsome features, shrouded by her black velvet coif, interrogated the domestic who steered her barge to the shore, what had become of Lindesay and Sir Robert Melville. The man related what had passed, and she smiled scornfully as she replied, "Fools must be flattered, not foughten with. Row back—make thy excuse as thou canst—say Lord Ruthven hath already reached this castle, and that he is impatient for Lord Lindesay's presence. Away with thee, Randal—yet stay—what galopin is that thou hast brought hither?"

"So please you, my lady, he is the page who is to wait upon—"

"Ay, the new male minion," said the Lady Lochleven; "the female attendant arrived yesterday. I shall have a well-ordered house with this lady and her retinue; but I trust they will soon find some others to undertake such a charge. Begone, Randal—and you" (to Roland Græme) "follow me to the garden."

She led the way with a slow and stately step to the small garden, which, enclosed by a stone wall ornamented with statues and an artificial fountain in the centre, extended its dull parterres on the side of the court-yard, with which it communicated by a low and arched portal. (Within the narrow circuit of its formal and limited walks, Mary Stewart was now learning to perform the weary part of a prisoner, which, with little interval, she was doomed to sustain during the remainder of her life. She was followed in her slow and melancholy exercise by two

female attendants; but in the first glance which Roland Græme bestowed upon one so illustrious by birth, so distinguished by her beauty, accomplishments, and misfortunes, he was sensible of the presence of no other than the unhappy Queen of Scotland.

Her face, her form, have been so deeply impressed upon the imagination, that, even at the distance of nearly three centuries, it is unnecessary to remind the most ignorant and uninformed reader of the striking traits which characterize that remarkable countenance, which seems at once to combine our ideas of the majestic, the pleasing, and the brilliant, leaving us to doubt whether they express most happily the queen, the beauty, or the accomplished woman. Who is there that, at the very mention of Mary Stewart's name, has not her countenance before him, familiar as that of the mistress of his youth or the favourite daughter of his advanced age? Even those who feel themselves compelled to believe all, or much, of what her enemies laid to her charge cannot think without a sigh upon a countenance expressive of anything rather than the foul crimes with which she was charged when living, and which still continue to shade, if not to blacken, her memory. That brow, so truly open and regal—those eyebrows, so regularly graceful, which yet were saved from the charge of regular insipidity by the beautiful effect of the hazel eyes which they over-arched, and which seemed to utter a thousand histories—the nose, with all its Grecian precision of outline—the mouth so well proportioned, so sweetly formed, as if designed to speak nothing but what was delightful to hear—the dimpled chin—the stately swan-like neck, form a countenance the like of which we know not to have existed in any other character moving in that class of life, where the actresses as well as the actors command

general and undivided attention. It is in vain to say that the portraits which exist of this remarkable woman are not like each other; for, amidst their discrepancy each possesses general features which the eye at once acknowledges as peculiar to the vision which our imagination has raised while we read her history for the first time, and which has been impressed upon it by the numerous prints and pictures which we have seen. Indeed we cannot look on the worst of them, however deficient in point of execution, without saying that it is meant for Queen Mary; and no small instance it is of the power of beauty, that her charms should have remained the subject not merely of admiration, but of warm and chivalrous interest, after the lapse of such a length of time. We know that by far the most acute of those who, in latter days, have adopted the unfavourable view of Mary's character, longed, like the executioner before his dreadful task was performed, to kiss the fair hand of her on whom he was about to perform so horrible a duty.

Dressed, then, in a deep mourning robe, and with all those charms of face, shape, and manner, with which faithful tradition has made each reader familiar, Mary Stewart advanced to meet the Lady of Lochleven, who, on her part, endeavoured to conceal dislike and apprehension under the appearance of respectful indifference. The truth was, that she had experienced repeatedly the Queen's superiority in that species of disguised, yet cutting sarcasm, with which women can successfully avenge themselves, for real and substantial injuries. It may be well doubted whether this talent was not as fatal to its possessor as the many others enjoyed by that highly-gifted, but most unhappy female; for, while it often afforded her a momentary triumph over her keepers, it

at first she was
 failed not to exasperate their resentment; and the satire and sarcasm in which she had indulged, were frequently retaliated by the deep and bitter hardships which they had the power of inflicting. It is well known that her death was at length hastened by a letter which she wrote to Queen Elizabeth, in which she treated her jealous rival, and the Countess of Shrewsbury, with the keenest irony and ridicule.

III.

As the ladies met together, the Queen said, bending her head at the same time in return to the obeisance of the Lady Lochleven, "We are this day fortunate—we enjoy the company of our amiable hostess at an unusual hour, and during a period which we have hitherto been permitted to give to our private exercise. But our good hostess knows well she has at all times access to our presence, and need not observe the useless ceremony of requiring our permission."

"I am sorry my presence is deemed an intrusion by your Grace," said the Lady of Lochleven; "I came but to announce the arrival of an addition to your train," motioning with her hand toward Roland Græme; "a circumstance to which ladies are seldom indifferent."

"Oh! I crave your ladyship's pardon, and am bent to the earth with obligations for the kindness of my nobles—or my sovereigns shall I call them?—who have permitted me such a respectable addition to my personal retinue."

"They have indeed studied, madam," said the Lady of Lochleven, "to show their kindness towards your Grace—something at the risk perhaps of sound policy, and I trust their doings will not be misconstrued."

"Impossible!" said the Queen; "the bounty which

permits the daughter of so many kings, and who yet is Queen of the realm, the attendance of two waiting-women and a boy, is a grace which Mary Stewart can never sufficiently acknowledge. Why, my train will be equal to that of any country dame in this your kingdom of Fife, saving but the lack of a gentleman-usher, and a pair or two of blue-coated serving-men. But I must not forget, in my selfish joy, the additional trouble and charges to which this magnificent augmentation of our train will put our kind hostess, and the whole house of Lochleven. It is this prudent anxiety, I am aware, which clouds your brows, my worthy lady. But be of good cheer; the crown of Scotland has many a fair manor, and your affectionate son, and my no less affectionate brother, will endow the good knight, your husband, with the best of them, ere Mary should be dismissed from this hospitable castle from your ladyship's lack of means to support the charges."

"The Douglasses of Lochleven, madam," answered the lady, "have known for ages how to discharge their duty to the State, without looking for reward, even when the task was both irksome and dangerous."

"Nay, but, my dear Lochleven," said the Queen, "you are over scrupulous—I pray you accept of a goodly manor; what should support the Queen of Scotland in this her princely court, saving her own crown-lands—and who should minister to the wants of a mother, save an affectionate son like the Earl of Murray, who possesses so wonderfully both the power and inclination? Or said you it was the danger of the task which clouded your smooth and hospitable brow? No doubt, a page is a formidable addition to my body-guard of females; and I bethink me it must have been for that reason that my Lord of Lindesay refused even now to venture within

the reach of a force so formidable, without being attended by a competent retinue."

The Lady Lochleven started, and looked something surprised: and Mary, suddenly changing her manner from the smooth ironical affectation of gladness to an accent of austere command, and drawing up at the same time her fine person, said, with the full majesty of her rank, "Yes, Lady of Lochleven, I know that Ruthven is already in the castle, and that Lindesay waits on the bank the return of your barge to bring him hither along with Sir Robert Melville. For what purpose do these nobles come? and why am I not in ordinary decency apprised of their arrival?"

"Their purpose, madam," replied the Lady of Lochleven, "they must themselves explain; but a formal annunciation were needless, where your Grace hath attendants who can play the espial so well."

"Alas! poor Fleming," said the Queen, turning to the elder of the female attendants, "thou wilt be tried, condemned, and gibbeted, for a spy in the garrison, because thou didst chance to cross the great hall while my good Lady of Lochleven was parleying at the full pitch of her voice with her pilot Randal. Put black wool in thy ears, girl, as you value the wearing of them longer. Remember, in the Castle of Lochleven, ears and tongues are matters not of use, but for show merely. Our good hostess can hear, as well as speak, for us all. We excuse your farther attendance, my lady hostess," she said, once more addressing the object of her resentment, "and retire to prepare for an interview with our rebel lords. We will use the ante-chamber of our sleeping apartment as our hall of audience. You, young man," she proceeded, addressing Roland Græme, and at once softening the ironical sharpness of her manner into good-humoured

raillery, "you, who are all our male attendance, from our Lord High Chamberlain down to our least galopin, follow us to prepare our court."

She turned and walked slowly towards the castle. The Lady of Lochleven folded her arms and smiled in bitter resentment, as she watched her retiring steps.

"Thy whole male attendance!" she muttered, repeating the Queen's last words, "and well for thee had it been had thy train never been larger." Then turning to Roland, in whose way she had stood while making this pause, she made room for him to pass, saying at the same time, "Art thou already eaves-dropping? follow thy mistress, minion, and, if thou wilt, tell her what I have now said."

Roland Græme hastened after his royal mistress and her attendants, who had just entered a postern-gate communicating betwixt the castle and the small garden. They ascended a winding-stair as high as the second story, which was in a great measure occupied by a suite of three rooms, opening into each other, and assigned as the dwelling of the captive princess. The outermost was a small hall or ante-room, within which opened a large parlour, and from that again the Queen's bed-room. Another small apartment, which opened into the same parlour, contained the beds of the gentlewomen in waiting.

Roland Græme stopped, as became his station, in the outermost of these apartments, there to await such orders as might be communicated to him. From the grated window of the room he saw Lindesay, Melville, and their followers disembark, and observed that they were met at the castle gate by a third noble, to whom Lindesay exclaimed, in his loud harsh voice, "My Lord of Ruthven, you have the start of us!"

At this instant the page's attention was called to a burst of hysterical sobs from the inner apartment, and to the hurried ejaculations of the terrified females, which led him almost instantly to hasten to their assistance. When he entered, he saw that the Queen had thrown herself into the large chair which stood nearest the door, and was sobbing for breath in a strong fit of hysterical affection. The elder female supported her in her arms, while the younger bathed her face with water and with tears alternately.

"Hasten, young man!" said the elder lady in alarm, "fly—call in assistance—she is swooning!"

But the Queen ejaculated in a faint and broken voice, "Stir not, I charge you! call no one to witness—I am better—I shall recover instantly." And, indeed, with an effort which seemed like that of one struggling for life, she sat up in her chair, and endeavoured to resume her composure, while her features yet trembled with the violent emotion of body and mind which she had undergone. "I am ashamed of my weakness, girls," she said, taking the hands of her attendants, "but it is over, and I am Mary Stewart once more. The savage tone of that man's voice, my knowledge of his insolence, the name which he named, the purpose for which they come, may excuse a moment's weakness—and it shall be a moment's only." She snatched from her head the curch, or cap, which had been disordered during her hysterical agony, shook down the thick clustered tresses of dark brown which had been before veiled under it, and, drawing her slender fingers across the labyrinth which they formed, she arose from the chair, and stood like the inspired image of a Grecian prophetess, in a mood which partook at once of sorrow and pride, of smiles and of tears. "We are ill appointed," she said, "to meet our rebel subjects;

but, as far as we may, we will strive to present ourselves as becomes their Queen. Follow me, my maidens," she said; "what says thy favourite song, my Fleming?

'My maids, come to my dressing-bower,
And deck my nut-brown hair;
Where'er ye laid a plait before,
Look ye lay ten times mair.'

Alas!" she added, when she had repeated with a smile these lines of an old ballad, "violence has already robbed me of the ordinary decorations of my rank; and the few that nature gave me have been destroyed by sorrow and by fear." Yet while she spoke thus, she again let her slender fingers stray through the wilderness of the beautiful tresses which veiled her kingly neck and swelling bosom, as if, in her agony of mind, she had not altogether lost the consciousness of her unrivalled charms. Roland Græme, on whose youth, inexperience, and ardent sense of what was dignified and lovely, the demeanour of so fair and high-born a lady wrought like the charm of a magician, stood rooted to the spot with surprise and interest, longing to hazard his life in a quarrel so fair as that which Mary Stewart's must needs be. She had been bred in France, she was possessed of the most distinguished beauty, she had reigned a Queen, and a Scottish Queen, to whom knowledge of character was as essential as the use of vital air. In all these capacities, Mary was, of all women on the earth, most alert at perceiving and using the advantages which her charms gave her over almost all who came within the sphere of their influence. She cast on Roland a glance which might have melted a heart of stone. "My poor boy," she said, with a feeling partly real, partly politic, "thou art a stranger to us—sent to this doleful captivity from the society of some

tender mother, or sister, or maiden, with whom you had freedom to tread a gay measure round the Maypole. I grieve for you; but you are the only male in my limited household—wilt thou obey my orders?"

"To the death, madam," said Græme in a determined tone.

"Then keep the door of mine apartment," said the Queen; "keep it till they offer actual violence, or till we shall be fitly arrayed to receive these intrusive visitors."

"I will defend it till they pass over my body," said Roland Græme; any hesitation which he had felt concerning the line of conduct he ought to pursue being completely swept away by the impulse of the moment.

"Not so, my good youth," answered Mary, "not so, I command thee. If I have one faithful subject beside me, much need, God wot, I have to care for his safety. Resist them but till they are put to the shame of using actual violence, and then give way, I charge you. Remember my commands." And, with a smile expressive at once of favour and of authority, she turned from him, and, followed by her attendants, entered the bed-room.

IV.

The youngest paused for half a second ere she followed her companion, and made a signal to Ronald Græme with her hand. He had been already long aware that this was Catherine Seyton—a circumstance which could not much surprise a youth of quick intellects, who recollected the sort of mysterious discourse which had passed betwixt the two matrons at the deserted nunnery, and on which his meeting with Catherine in this place seemed to cast so much light. Yet such was the engrossing effect

of Mary's presence, that it surmounted for the moment even the feelings of a youthful lover; and it was not until Catherine Seyton had disappeared, that Roland began to consider in what relation they were to stand to each other. "She held up her hand to me in a commanding manner," he thought; "perhaps she wanted to confirm my purpose for the execution of the Queen's commands. I think my Lord of Murray will himself own that it is the duty of a faithful page to defend his lady against intrusion on her privacy."

Accordingly, he stepped to the little vestibule, made fast, with lock and bar, the door which opened from thence to the large staircase, and then sat himself down to attend the result. He had not long to wait—a rude and strong hand first essayed to lift the latch, then pushed and shook the door with violence, and, when it resisted his attempt to open it, exclaimed, "Undo the door there, you within!"

"Why, and at whose command," said the page, "am I to undo the door of the apartments of the Queen of Scotland?"

Another vain attempt, which made hinge and bolt jingle, showed that the impatient applicant without would willingly have entered altogether regardless of his challenge; but at length an answer was returned.

"Undo the door, on your peril—the Lord Lindesay comes to speak with the Lady Mary of Scotland."

"The Lord Lindesay, as a Scottish noble," answered the page, "must await his Sovereign's leisure."

An earnest altercation ensued amongst those without, in which Roland distinguished the remarkable harsh voice of Lindesay in reply to Sir Robert Melville, who appeared to have been using some soothing language—"No! no! no! I tell thee, no! I will place a petard

against the door rather than be baulked by a profligate woman, and bearded by an insolent footboy."

"Yet, at least," said Melville, "let me try fair means in the first instance. Violence to a lady would stain your scutcheon for ever. Or await till my Lord Ruthven comes."

"I will await no longer," said Lindesay; "it is high time the business were done and we on our return to the council. But thou mayest try thy fair play, as thou callest it, while I cause my train to prepare the petard. I came hither provided with as good gunpowder as blew up the Kirk of Field."

"For God's sake, be patient," said Melville; and approaching the door, he said, as speaking to those within, "Let the Queen know that I, her faithful servant, Robert Melville, do entreat her, for her own sake, and to prevent worse consequences, that she will undo the door and admit Lord Lindesay who brings a mission from the Council of State."

"I will do your errand to the Queen," said the page, "and report to you her answer."

He went to the door of the bedchamber, and tapping against it gently, it was opened by the elderly lady, to whom he communicated his errand, and returned with directions from the Queen to admit Sir Robert Melville and Lord Lindesay. Roland Græme returned to the vestibule and opened the door accordingly, into which the Lord Lindesay strode, with the air of a soldier who has fought his way into a conquered fortress, while Melville, deeply dejected, followed him more slowly.

"I draw you to witness and to record," said the page to this last, "that, save for the especial commands of the Queen, I would have made good the entrance with my best strength and my best blood against all Scotland."

"Be silent, young man," said Melville in a tone of

grave rebuke; "add not brands to fire—this is no time to make a flourish of thy boyish chivalry."

"She has not appeared even yet," said Lindesay, who had now reached the midst of the parlour or audience-room; "how call you this trifling?"

"Patience, my lord," replied Sir Robert, "time presses not—and Lord Ruthven hath not as yet descended."

At this moment the door of the inner apartment opened, and Queen Mary presented herself, advancing with an air of peculiar grace and majesty, and seeming totally unruffled either by the visit, or by the rude manner in which it had been enforced. Her dress was a robe of black velvet; a small ruff open in front, gave a full view of her beautifully-formed chin and neck, but veiled the bosom. On her head she wore a small cap of lace, and a transparent white veil hung from her shoulders over the long black robe in large loose folds, so that it could be drawn at pleasure over the face and person. She wore a cross of gold around her neck, and had her rosary of gold and ebony hanging from her girdle. She was closely followed by her two ladies, who remained standing behind her during the conference. Even Lord Lindesay, though the rudest noble of that rude age, was surprised into something like respect by the unconcerned and majestic mien of her, whom he had expected to find frantic with impotent passion, or dissolved in useless and vain sorrow, or overwhelmed with the fears likely in such a situation to assail fallen royalty.

"We fear we have detained you, my Lord of Lindesay," said the Queen, while she curtsied with dignity in answer to his reluctant obeisance, "but a female does not willingly receive her visitors without some minutes spent at the toilet. Men, my lord, are less dependent on such ceremonies."

V.

Lord Lindesay, casting his eye down on his own travel-stained and disordered dress, muttered something of a hasty journey, and the Queen paid her greeting to Sir Robert Melville with courtesy, and even, as it seemed, with kindness. There was then a dead pause, during which Lindesay looked towards the door, as if expecting with impatience the colleague of their embassy. The Queen alone was entirely unembarrassed, and, as if to break the silence, she addressed Lord Lindesay, with a glance at the large and cumbrous sword which he wore hanging from his neck.

"You have there a trusty and a weighty travelling companion, my lord. I trust you expected to meet with no enemy here, against whom such a formidable weapon could be necessary? It is, methinks, somewhat a singular ornament for a court, though I am, as I well need to be, too much of a Stewart to fear a sword."

"It is not the first time, madam," replied Lindesay, bringing round the weapon so as to rest its point on the ground, and leaning one hand on the huge cross-handle, "it is not the first time that this weapon has intruded itself into the presence of the House of Stewart."

"Possibly, my lord," replied the Queen, "it may have done service to my ancestors. Your ancestors were men of loyalty."

"Ay, madam," replied he, "service it hath done; but such as kings love neither to acknowledge nor to reward. It was the service which the knife renders to the tree when trimming it to the quick, and depriving it of the superfluous growth of rank and unfruitful suckers which rob it of nourishment."

"You talk riddles, my lord," said Mary; "I will hope the explanation carries nothing insulting with it."

"You shall judge, madam," answered Lindesay. "With this good sword was Archibald Douglas, Earl of Angus, girded on the memorable day when he acquired the name of Bell-the-Cat, for dragging from the presence of your great-grandfather, the third James of the race, a crew of minions, flatterers, and favourites, whom he hanged over the bridge of Lauder, as a warning to such reptiles how they approach a Scottish throne. With this same weapon the same inflexible champion of Scottish honour and nobility slew at one blow Spens of Kilspindie, a courtier of your grandfather, James the Fourth, who had dared to speak lightly of him in the royal presence. They fought near the brook of Fala; and Bell-the-Cat, with this blade, sheared through the thigh of his opponent, and lopped the limb as easily as a shepherd's boy slices a twig from a sapling."

"My lord," replied the Queen reddening, "my nerves are too good to be alarmed even by this terrible history. May I ask how a blade so illustrious passed from the House of Douglas to that of Lindesay? Methinks it should have been preserved as a consecrated relic by a family who have held all that they could do against their king, to be done in favour of their country."

"Nay, madam," said Melville, anxiously interfering, "ask not that question of Lord Lindesay; and you, my lord, for shame, for decency, forbear to reply to it."

"It is time that this lady should hear the truth," replied Lindesay.

"And be assured," said the Queen, "that she will be moved to anger by none that you can tell her, my lord. There are cases in which just scorn has always the mastery over just anger."

"Then know," said Lindesay, "that upon the field of Carberry-hill, when that false and infamous traitor and murderer, James, sometime Earl of Bothwell, and nicknamed Duke of Orkney, offered to do personal battle with any of the associated nobles who came to drag him to justice, I accepted his challenge, and was by the noble Earl of Morton gifted with his good sword that I might therewith fight it out. Ah! so help me Heaven, had his presumption been one grain more, or his cowardice one grain less, I should have done such work with this good steel on his traitorous corpse, that the hounds and carrion-crows should have found their morsels daintily carved to their use!"

The Queen's courage well-nigh gave way at the mention of Bothwell's name—a name connected with such a train of guilt, shame, and disaster. But the prolonged boast of Lindesay gave her time to rally herself and to answer with an appearance of cold contempt—"It is easy to slay an enemy who enters not the lists. But had Mary Stewart inherited her father's sword as well as his sceptre, the boldest of her rebels should not upon that day have complained that they had no one to cope withal. Your lordship will forgive me if I abridge this conference. A brief description of a bloody fight is long enough to satisfy a lady's curiosity; and unless my Lord of Lindesay has something more important to tell us than of the deeds which old Bell-the-Cat achieved, and how he would himself have emulated them had time and tide permitted, we will retire to our private apartment; and you, Fleming, shall finish reading to us yonder little treatise *Des Rodomontades Espagnolles*."

"Tarry, madam," said Lindesay, his complexion reddening in his turn; "I know your quick wit too well of old to have sought an interview that you might sharpen

its edge at the expense of my honour. Lord Ruthven and myself, with Sir Robert Melville as a concurrent, come to your Grace on the part of the Secret Council, to tender to you what much concerns the safety of your own life and the welfare of the State."

"The Secret Council?" said the Queen; "by what powers can it subsist or act, while I, from whom it holds its character, am here detained under unjust restraint? But it matters not—what concerns the welfare of Scotland shall be acceptable to Mary Stewart, come from whatever quarter it will—and for what concerns her own life, she has lived long enough to be weary of it, even at the age of twenty-five. Where is your colleague, my lord?—why tarries he?"

"He comes, madam," said Melville, and Lord Ruthven entered at the instant, holding in his hand a packet. As the Queen returned his salutation she became deadly pale, but instantly recovered herself by dint of strong and sudden resolution, just as the noble, whose appearance seemed to excite such emotions in her bosom, entered the apartment in company with George Douglas, the youngest son of the Knight of Lochleven, who, during the absence of his father and brethren, acted as Seneschal of the castle, under the direction of the elder Lady Lochleven, his father's mother.

VI.

Lord Ruthven had the look and bearing which became a soldier and a statesman, and the martial cast of his form and features procured him the popular epithet of Greysteil, by which he was distinguished by his intimates, after the hero of a metrical romance then generally known. His dress, which was a buff-coat embroidered,

had a half-military character, but exhibited nothing of the sordid negligence which distinguished that of Lindsay. But the son of an ill-fated sire, and the father of a yet more unfortunate family, bore in his look that cast of inauspicious melancholy, by which the physiognomists of that time pretended to distinguish those who were predestined to a violent and unhappy death.

The terror which the presence of this nobleman impressed on the Queen's mind, arose from the active share he had borne in the slaughter of David Rizzio; his father having presided at the perpetration of that abominable crime, although so weak from long and wasting illness, that he could not endure the weight of his armour, having arisen from a sick-bed to commit a murder in the presence of his Sovereign. On that occasion his son also had attended and taken an active part. It was little to be wondered at, that the Queen, considering her condition when such a deed of horror was acted in her presence, should retain an instinctive terror for the principal actors in the murder. She returned, however, with grace the salutation of Lord Ruthven, and extended her hand to George Douglas, who kneeled, and kissed it with respect; the first mark of a subject's homage which Roland Græme had seen any of them render to the captive Sovereign. She returned his greeting in silence, and there was a brief pause, during which the steward of the castle, a man of a sad brow and a severe eye, placed, under George Douglas's directions, a table and writing materials; and the page, obedient to his mistress's dumb signal, advanced a large chair to the side on which the Queen stood, the table thus forming a sort of bar which divided the Queen and her personal followers from her unwelcome visitors. The steward then withdrew after a low reverence. When he had closed the

door behind him, the Queen broke silence—"With your favour, my lords, I will sit—my walks are not indeed extensive enough at present to fatigue me greatly, yet I find repose something more necessary than usual."

She sat down accordingly, and, shading her cheek with her beautiful hand, looked keenly and impressively at each of the nobles in turn. Mary Fleming applied her kerchief to her eyes, and Catherine Seyton and Roland Græme exchanged a glance, which showed that both were too deeply engrossed with sentiments of interest and commiseration for their royal mistress, to think of anything which regarded themselves.

"I wait the purpose of your mission, my lords," said the Queen, after she had been seated for about a minute without a word being spoken,—“I wait your message from those you call the Secret Council. I trust it is a petition of pardon, and a desire that I will resume my rightful throne, without using with due severity my right of punishing those who have dispossessed me of it.”

“Madam,” replied Ruthven, “it is painful for us to speak harsh truths to a Princess who has long ruled us. But we come to offer, not to implore, pardon. In a word, madam, we have to propose to you on the part of the Secret Council, that you sign these deeds, which will contribute greatly to the pacification of the State, the advancement of God’s word, and the welfare of your own future life.”

“Am I expected to take these fair words on trust, my lord? or may I hear the contents of these reconciling papers, ere I am asked to sign them?”

“Unquestionably, madam; it is our purpose and wish, you should read what you are required to sign,” replied Ruthven.

"Required?" replied the Queen, with some emphasis; "but the phrase suits well the matter—read, my lord."

The Lord Ruthven proceeded to read a formal instrument, running in the Queen's name, and setting forth that she had been called, at an early age, to the administration of the crown and realm of Scotland, and had toiled diligently therein, until she was in body and spirit so wearied out and disgusted, that she was unable any longer to endure the travail and pain of State affairs; and that since God had blessed her with a fair and hopeful son, she was desirous to ensure to him, even while she yet lived, his succession to the crown, which was his by right of hereditary descent. "Wherefore," the instrument proceeded, "we, of the motherly affection we bear to our said son, have renounced and demitted, and by these our letters of free good-will, renounce and demit, the Crown, government, and guiding of the realm of Scotland, in favour of our said son, that he may succeed to us as native Prince thereof, as much as if we had been removed by disease, and not by our own proper act. And that this demission of our royal authority may have the more full and solemn effect, and none pretend ignorance, we give, grant, and commit, full and free and plain power to our trusty cousins, Lord Lindesay of the Byres, and William Lord Ruthven, to appear in our name before as many of the nobility, clergy, and burghesses, as may be assembled at Stirling, and there, in our name and behalf, publicly, and in their presence, to renounce the Crown, guidance, and government of this our kingdom of Scotland."

The Queen here broke in with an air of extreme surprise. "How is this, my lords?" she said: "Are my ears turned rebels, that they deceive me with sounds so extraordinary?—And yet it is no wonder that, having conversed

so long with rebellion, they should now force its language upon my understanding. Say I am mistaken, my lords—say, for the honour of yourselves and the Scottish nobility, that my right trusty consins of Lindesay and Ruthven, two barons of warlike fame and ancient line, have not sought the prison-house of their kind mistress for such a purpose as these words seem to imply. Say, for the sake of honour and loyalty, that my ears have deceived me.”

“No, madam,” said Ruthven gravely, “your ears do not deceive you—they deceived you when they were closed against the preachers of the evangel, and the honest advice of your faithful subjects; and when they were ever open to flattery of pickthanks and traitors, foreign cubiculars and domestic minions. The land may no longer brook the rule of one who cannot rule herself; wherefore, I pray you to comply with the last remaining wish of your subjects and counsellors, and spare yourself and us the farther agitation of matter so painful.”

“And is this *all* my loving subjects require of me, my lord?” said Mary, in a tone of bitter irony. “Do they really stint themselves to the easy boon that I should yield up the crown, which is mine by birthright, to an infant which is scarcely more than a year old—fling down my sceptre, and take up a distaff—Oh no! it is too little for them to ask—That other roll of parchment contains something harder to be complied with, and which may more highly task my readiness to comply with the petitions of my lieges.”

“This parchment,” answered Ruthven, in the same tone of inflexible gravity, and unfolding the instrument as he spoke, “is one by which your Grace constitutes your nearest in blood, and the most honourable and trustworthy of your subjects, James, Earl of Murray,

Regent of the kingdom during the minority of the young King. He already holds the appointment from the Secret Council."

The Queen gave a sort of shriek, and, clapping her hands together, exclaimed, "Comes the arrow out of his quiver?—out of my brother's bow?—Alas! I looked for his return from France as my sole, at least my readiest, chance of deliverance.—And yet, when I heard that he had assumed the government, I guessed he would shame to wield it in my name."

"I must pray your answer, madam," said Lord Ruthven, "to the demand of the Council."

"The demand of the Council!" said the Queen; "say rather the demand of a set of robbers, impatient to divide the spoil they have seized. To such a demand, and sent by the mouth of a traitor, whose scalp, but for my womanish mercy, should long since have stood on the city gates, Mary of Scotland has no answer."

"I trust, madam," said Lord Ruthven, "my being unacceptable to your presence will not add to your obduracy of resolution. It may become you to remember that the death of the minion, Rizzio, cost the house of Ruthven its head and leader. My father, more worthy than a whole province of such vile sycophants died in exile and broken-hearted."

VII.

The Queen clasped her hands on her face, and, resting her arms on the table, stooped down her head and wept so bitterly, that the tears were seen to find their way in streams between the white and slender fingers with which she endeavoured to conceal them.

"My lords," said Sir Robert Melville, "this is too much rigour. Under your lordships' favour, we came

hither, not to revive old griefs, but to find the mode of avoiding new ones."

"Sir Robert Melville," said Ruthven, "we best know for what purpose we were delegated hither, and wherefore you were somewhat unnecessarily sent to attend us."

"Nay, by my hand," said Lord Lindesay, "I know not why we were cumbered with the good knight, unless he comes in place of the lump of sugar which pothecars put into their wholesome but bitter medicaments, to please a froward child—a needless labour, methinks, where men have the means to make them swallow the physic otherwise."

"Nay, my lords," said Melville, "ye best know your own secret instructions. I conceive I shall best obey mine in striving to mediate between her Grace and you."

"Be silent, Sir Robert Melville," said the Queen, arising, and her face still glowing with agitation as she spoke. "My kerchief, Fleming—I shame that traitors should have power to move me thus.—Tell me, proud lords," she added, wiping away the tears as she spoke, "by what earthly warrant can liege subjects pretend to challenge the rights of an anointed Sovereign—to throw off the allegiance they have vowed, and to take away the crown from the head on which Divine warrant hath placed it?"

"Madam," said Ruthven, "I will deal plainly with you. Your reign, from the dismal field of Pinkie-cleugh, when you were a babe in the cradle, till now that ye stand a grown dame before us, hath been such a tragedy of losses, disasters, civil dissensions, and foreign wars, that the like is not to be found in our chronicles. The French and English have, with one consent, made Scotland the battle-field on which to fight out their own ancient quarrel.—

For ourselves, every man's hand hath been against his brother, nor hath a year passed over without rebellion and slaughter, exile of nobles, and oppressing of the commons. We may endure it no longer, and therefore, as a prince, to whom God hath refused the gift of hearing to wise counsel, and on whose dealings and projects no blessing hath ever descended, we pray you to give way to other rule and governance of the land, that a remnant may yet be saved to this distracted realm."

"My lord," said Mary, "it seems to me that you fling on my unhappy and devoted head those evils, which, with far more justice, I may impute to your own turbulent, wild, and untameable dispositions—the frantic violence with which you, the Magnates of Scotland, enter into feuds against each other, sticking at no cruelty to gratify your wrath, taking deep revenge for the slightest offences, and setting at defiance those wise laws which your ancestors made for stanching of such cruelty, rebelling against the lawful authority, and bearing yourselves as if there were no king in the land; or rather as if each were king in his own premises. And now you throw the blame on me—on me, whose life has been embittered—whose sleep has been broken—whose happiness has been wrecked by your dissensions. Have I not myself been obliged to traverse wilds and mountains, at the head of a few faithful followers, to maintain peace and to put down oppression? Have I not worn harness on my person, and carried pistols at my saddle; fain to lay aside the softness of a woman, and the dignity of a queen, that I might show an example to my followers!"

"We grant, madam," said Lindesay, "that the affrays occasioned by your misgovernment, may sometimes have startled you in the midst of a masque or galliard; or it may be that such may have interrupted the idolatry of

the mass, or the jesuitical counsels of some French ambassador. But the longest and severest journey which your Grace has taken in my memory, was from Hawick to Hermitage Castle; and whether it was for the weal of the State, or for your own honour, rests with your Grace's conscience."

The Queen turned to him with inexpressible sweetness of tone and manner, and that engaging look which Heaven had assigned her, as if to show that the choicest arts to win men's affections may be given in vain. "Lindesay," she said, "you spoke not to me in this stern tone, and with such scurril taunt, yon fair summer evening, when you and I shot at the butts against the Earl of Mar and Mary Livingstone, and won of them the evening's collation, in the privy garden of St. Andrews. The Master of Lindesay was then my friend, and vowed to be my soldier. How I have offended the Lord of Lindesay I know not, unless honours have changed manners."

Hardhearted as he was, Lindesay seemed struck with this unexpected appeal, but almost instantly replied, "Madam, it is well known that your Grace could in those days make fools of whoever approached you. I pretend not to have been wiser than others. But gayer men and better courtiers soon jostled aside my rude homage, and I think your Grace cannot but remember times, when my awkward attempts to take the manners that pleased you, were the sport of the court-popinjays, the Marys and the Frenchwomen."

"My lord, I grieve if I have offended you through idle gaiety," said the Queen; "and can but say it was most unwittingly done. You are fully revenged; for through gaiety," she said with a sigh, "will I never offend any one more."

"Our time is wasting, madam," said Lord Ruthven; "I must pray your decision on this weighty matter which I have submitted to you."

"What, my lord!" said the Queen, "upon the instant, and without a moment's time to deliberate?—Can the Council, as they term themselves, expect this of me?"

"Madam," replied Ruthven, "the Council hold the opinion, that since the fatal term which passed betwixt the night of King Henry's murder and the day of Carberry-hill, your Grace should have held you prepared for the measure now proposed, as the easiest escape from your numerous dangers and difficulties."

"Great God!" exclaimed the Queen; "and is it as a boon that you propose to me, what every Christian king ought to regard as a loss of honour equal to the loss of life!—You take from me my crown, my power, my subjects, my wealth, my state. What, in the name of every saint, can you offer, or do you offer, in requital of my compliance?"

"We give you pardon," answered Ruthven, sternly—"we give you space and means to spend your remaining life in penitence and seclusion—we give you time to make your peace with Heaven, and to receive the pure Gospel, which you have ever rejected and persecuted."

The Queen turned pale at the menace which this speech, as well as the rough and inflexible tones of the speaker, seemed distinctly to infer—"And if I do not comply with your request so fiercely urged, my lord, what then follows?"

She said this in a voice in which female and natural fear was contending with the feelings of insulted dignity.—There was a pause, as if no one cared to return to the question a distinct answer. At length Ruthven spoke: "There is little need to tell to your Grace, who are well

read both in the laws and in the chronicles of the realm, that murder and adultery are crimes for which ere now queens themselves have suffered death."

"And where, my lord, or how, found you an accusation so horrible, against her who stands before you?" said Queen Mary. "The foul and odious calumnies which have poisoned the general mind of Scotland, and have placed me a helpless prisoner in your hands, are surely no proof of guilt?"

"We need look for no farther proof," replied the stern Lord Ruthven, "than the shameless marriage betwixt the widow of the murdered and the leader of the band of murderers!—They that joined hands in the fated month of May, had already united hearts and counsel in the deed which preceded that marriage but a few brief weeks."

"My lord, my lord!" said the Queen eagerly, "remember well there were more consents than mine to that fatal union, that most unhappy act of a most unhappy life. The evil steps adopted by sovereigns are often the suggestion of bad counsellors; but these counsellors are worse than fiends who tempt and betray, if they themselves are the first to call their unfortunate princes to answer for the consequences of their own advice.—Heard ye never of a bond by the nobles, my lords, recommending that ill-fated union to the ill-fated Mary? Methinks, were it carefully examined, we should see that the names of Morton, and of Lindesay, and of Ruthven, may be found in that bond, which pressed me to marry that unhappy man.—Ah! stout and loyal Lord Herries, who never knew guile or dishonour, you bent your noble knee to me in vain, to warn me of my danger, and wert yet the first to draw thy good sword in my cause when I suffered for neglecting thy counsel! Faithful knight and

true noble, what a difference betwixt thee and those counsellors of evil, who now threaten my life for having fallen into the snares they spread for me!"

"Madam," said Ruthven, "we know that you are an orator; and perhaps for that reason the Council has sent hither men, whose converse hath been more with the wars, than with the language of the schools or the cabals of state. We but desire to know if, on assurance of life and honour, ye will demit the rule of this kingdom of Scotland?"

"And what warrant have I," said the Queen, "that ye will keep treaty with me, if I should barter my kingly estate for seclusion, and leave to weep in secret?"

"Our honour and our word, madam," answered Ruthven.

"They are too slight and unsolid pledges, my lord," said the Queen; "add at least a handful of thistle-down to give them weight in the balance."

"Away, Ruthven," said Lindesay; "she was ever deaf to counsel, save of slaves and sycophants; let her remain by her refusal, and abide by it!"

"Stay, my lord," said Sir Robert Melville, "or rather permit me to have but a few minutes' private audience with her Grace. If my presence with you could avail aught, it must be as a mediator—do not, I conjure you, leave the castle, or break off the conference, until I bring you word how her Grace shall finally stand disposed."

"We will remain in the hall," said Lindesay, "for half an hour's space; but in despising our words and our pledge of honour, she has touched the honour of my name—let her look herself to the course she has to pursue. If the half hour should pass away without her determining to comply with the demands of the nation, her career will be brief enough."

With little ceremony the two nobles left the apartment, traversed the vestibule, and descended the winding

stairs, the clash of Lindesay's huge sword being heard as it rang against each step in his descent. George Douglas followed them, after exchanging with Melville a gesture of surprise and sympathy.

VIII

As soon as they were gone, the Queen, giving way to grief, fear, and agitation, threw herself into the seat, wrung her hands, and seemed to abandon herself to despair. Her female attendants, weeping themselves, endeavoured yet to pray her to be composed, and Sir Robert Melville, kneeling at her feet, made the same entreaty. After giving way to a passionate burst of sorrow, she at length said to Melville, "Kneel not to me, Melville—mock me not with the homage of the person, when the heart is far away. Why stay you behind with the deposed, the condemned?—her who has but few hours, perchance, to live? You have been favoured as well as the rest; why do you continue the empty show of gratitude and thankfulness any longer than they?"

"Madam," said Sir Robert Melville, "so help me Heaven at my need, my heart is as true to you as when you were in your highest place."

"True to me! true to me!" repeated the Queen, with some scorn; "tush, Melville, what signifies the truth which walks hand in hand with my enemies' falsehood?—thy hand and thy sword have never been so well acquainted that I can trust thee in aught where manhood is required. Oh, Seyton, for thy bold father, who is both wise, true, and valiant!"

Roland Græme could withstand no longer his earnest desire to offer his services to a princess so distressed and so beautiful. "If one sword," he said, "madam, can do

anything to back the wisdom of this grave counsellor, or to defend your rightful cause, here is my weapon, and here is my hand ready to draw and use it." And raising his sword with one hand, he laid the other upon the hilt.

As he thus held up the weapon, Catherine Seyton exclaimed, "Methinks I see a token from my father, madam;" and immediately crossing the apartment, she took Roland Græme by the skirt of the cloak, and asked him earnestly whence he had that sword.

The page answered with surprise, "Methinks this is no presence in which to jest. Surely, damsel, you yourself best know whence and how I obtained the weapon."

"Is this a time for folly?" said Catherine Seyton; "unsheathe the sword instantly."

"If the Queen commands me," said the youth, looking towards his royal mistress.

"For shame, maiden!" said the Queen; "wouldst thou instigate the poor boy to enter into useless strife with the two most approved soldiers in Scotland?"

"In your Grace's cause," replied the page, "I will venture my life upon them!" And as he spoke, he drew his weapon partly from the sheath, and a piece of parchment, rolled around the blade, fell out and dropped on the floor. Catherine Seyton caught it up with eager haste.

"It is my father's hand-writing," she said, "and doubtless conveys his best duteous advice to your Majesty; I know that it was prepared to be sent in this weapon, but I expected another messenger."

"By my faith, fair one," thought Roland, "and if you knew not that I had such a secret missive about me, I was yet more ignorant."

The Queen cast her eye upon the scroll, and remained a few minutes wrapped in deep thought. "Sir Robert

Melville," she at length said, "this scroll advises me to submit myself to necessity, and to subscribe the deeds these hard men have brought with them, as one who gives way to the natural fear inspired by the threats of rebels and murderers. You, Sir Robert, are a wise man, and Seyton is both sagacious and brave. Neither, I think, would mislead me in this matter."

"Madam," said Melville, "if I have not the strength of body of the Lord Herries or Seyton, I will yield to neither in zeal for your Majesty's service. I cannot fight for you like these lords, but neither of them is more willing to die for your service."

"I believe it, my old and faithful counsellor," said the Queen; "and believe me, Melville, I did thee but a moment's injustice. Read what my Lord Seyton hath written to us, and give us thy best counsel."

He glanced over the parchment, and instantly replied, "Oh! my dear and royal mistress, only treason itself could give you other advice than Lord Seyton has here expressed. He, Herries, Huntly, the English ambassador Throgmorton and others, your friends, are all alike of opinion, that whatever deeds or instruments you execute within these walls, must lose all force and effect, as extorted from your Grace by duress, by sufferance of present evil, and fear of men, and harm to ensue on your refusal. Yield, therefore, to the tide, and be assured, that in subscribing what parchments they present to you, you bind yourself to nothing, since your act of signature wants that which alone can make it valid, the free will of the granter."

"Ay, so says my Lord Seyton," replied Mary; "yet methinks, for the daughter of so long a line of sovereigns to resign her birthright, because rebels press upon her with threats, argues little of royalty, and will read ill for

the fame of Mary in future chronicles. Tush! Sir Robert Melville, the traitors may use black threats and bold words, but they will not dare to put their hands forth on our person."

"Alas! madam, they have already dared so far and incurred such peril by the lengths which they have gone, that they are but one step from the worst and uttermost."

"Surely," said the Queen, her fears again predominating, "Scottish nobles would not lend themselves to assassinate a helpless woman?"

"Bethink you, madam," he replied, "what horrid spectacles have been seen in our day; and what act is so dark, that some Scottish hand has not been found to dare it? Lord Lindesay, besides his natural sullenness and hardness of temper, is the near kinsman of Henry Darnley, and Ruthven has his own deep and dangerous plans. The Council, besides, speak of proofs by writ and word, of a casket with letters—of I know not what."

"Ah! good Melville," answered the Queen, "were I as sure of the evenhanded integrity of my judges, as of my own innocence—and yet——"

"Oh! pause, madam," said Melville; "even innocence must sometimes for a season stoop to injurious blame. Besides, you are here——"

He looked round and paused.

"Speak out, Melville," said the Queen, "never one approached my person who wished to work me evil; and even this poor page, whom I have to-day seen for the first time in my life, I can trust safely with your communication."

"Nay, madam," answered Melville, "in such emergency, and he being the bearer of Lord Seyton's message, I will venture to say, before him and these fair ladies,

whose truth and fidelity I dispute not—I say I will venture to say, that there are other modes besides that of open trial, by which deposed sovereigns often die; and that, as Machiavel saith, there is but one step betwixt a king's prison and his grave."

"Oh! were it but swift and easy for the body," said the unfortunate Princess, "were it but a safe and happy change for the soul, the woman lives not that would take the step so soon as I—But, alas! Melville, when we think of death, a thousand sins, which we have trod as worms beneath our feet, rise up against us as flaming serpents. Most injuriously do they accuse me of aiding Darnley's death; yet, blessed Lady! I afforded too open occasion for the suspicion—I espoused Bothwell."

"Think not of that now, madam," said Melville, "think rather of the immediate mode of saving yourself and son. Comply with the present unreasonable demands, and trust that better times will shortly arrive."

"Madam," said Roland Græme, "if it pleases you that I should do so, I will presently swim through the lake, if they refuse me other conveyance to the shore; I will go to the courts successively of England, France, and Spain, and will shew you have subscribed these vile instruments from no stronger impulse than the fear of death, and I will do battle against them that say otherwise."

IX.

The Queen turned her round and with one of those sweet smiles which, during the era of life's romance, overpay every risk, held her hand towards Roland, but without speaking a word. He kneeled reverently and kissed it, and Melville again resumed his plea.

"Madam," he said, "time presses, and you must not

let those boats, which I see they are even now preparing, put forth on the lake. Here are enough of witnesses—your ladies—this bold youth—myself, when it can serve your cause effectually, for I would not hastily stand committed in this matter—but even without me here is evidence enough to show that you have yielded to the demands of the Council through force and fear, but from no sincere and unconstrained assent. Their boats are already manned for their return—oh! permit your old servant to recall them.”

“Melville,” said the Queen, “thou art an ancient courtier—when didst thou ever know a sovereign prince recall to his presence subjects who had parted from him on such terms as those on which these envoys of the Council left us, and who yet were recalled without submission or apology? Let it cost me both life and crown, I will not again command them to my presence.”

“Alas! madam, that empty form should make a barrier. If I rightly understand, you are not unwilling to listen to real and advantageous counsel—but your scruple is saved—I hear them returning to ask your final resolution. Oh! take the advice of the noble Seyton and you may once more command those who now usurp a triumph over you. But hush! I hear them in the vestibule.”

As he concluded speaking, George Douglas opened the door of the apartment, and marshalled in the two noble envoys.

“We come, madam,” said the Lord Ruthven, “to request your answer to the proposal of the Council.”

“Your final answer,” said Lord Lindesay; “for with a refusal you must couple the certainty that you have precipitated your fate, and renounced the last opportunity of making peace with God and ensuring your longer abode in the world.”

"My lords," said Mary with inexpressible grace and dignity, "the evils we cannot resist we must submit to. I will subscribe these parchments with such liberty of choice as my condition permits me. Were I on yonder shore with a fleet jennet and ten good and loyal knights around me, I would subscribe my sentence of eternal condemnation as soon as the resignation of my throne. But here, in the Castle of Lochleven, with deep water around me—and you, my lords, beside me—I have no freedom of choice. Give me the pen, Melville, and bear witness to what I do, and why I do it."

"It is our hope your grace will not suppose yourself compelled by any apprehensions from us," said the Lord Ruthven, "to execute what must be your own voluntary deed."

The Queen had already stooped towards the table and placed the parchment before her, with the pen between her fingers ready for the important act of signature. But when Lord Ruthven had done speaking she looked up, stopped short, and threw down the pen. "If," she said, "I am expected to declare I give away my crown of free will, or otherwise than because I am compelled to renounce it by the threat of worse evils to myself and my subjects, I will not put my name to such an untruth—not to gain full possession of England, France, and Scotland!—all once my own in possession or by right."

"Beware, madam," said Lindesay, and snatching hold of the Queen's arm with his own gauntleted hand, he pressed it in the rudeness of his passion, more closely, perhaps, than he was himself aware of, "beware how you contend with those who are the stronger, and have the mastery of your fate!"

He held his grasp on her arm, bending his eyes on her

with a stern and intimidating look, till both Ruthven and Melville cried shame; and Douglas, who had hitherto remained in a state of apparent apathy, had made a stride from the door as if to interfere. The rude baron then quitted his hold, disguising the confusion which he really felt at having indulged his passion to such extent, under a sullen and contemptuous smile.

The Queen immediately began, with an expression of pain, to bare the arm which he had grasped, by drawing up the sleeve of her gown, and it appeared that his gripe had left the purple marks of his iron fingers upon her flesh—"My lord," she said, "as a knight and gentleman you might have spared my frail arm so severe a proof that you have the greater strength on your side, and are resolved to use it. But I thank you for it—it is the most decisive token of the terms on which this day's business is to rest. I draw you to witness, both lords and ladies," she said, showing the marks of the grasp on her arm, "that I subscribe these instruments in obedience to the sign manual of my Lord of Lindesay, which you may see imprinted on mine arm."

Lindesay would have spoken, but was restrained by his colleague Ruthven, who said to him, "Peace, my lord. Let the Lady Mary of Scotland ascribe her signature to what she will, it is our business to procure it and carry it to the Council. Should there be debate hereafter on the manner in which it was adhibited, there will be time enough for it."

Lindesay was silent accordingly, only muttering within his beard, "I meant not to hurt her; but I think women's flesh be as tender as new-fallen snow."

The Queen meanwhile subscribed the rolls of parchment with a hasty indifference, as if they had been matters of slight consequence, or of mere formality.

When she had performed this painful task, she arose, and, having curtsied to the lords, was about to withdraw to her chamber. Ruthven and Sir Robert Melville made, the first a formal reverence, the second an obeisance, in which his desire to acknowledge his sympathy was obviously checked by the fear of appearing in the eyes of his colleagues too partial to his former mistress. But Lindesay stood motionless, even when they were preparing to withdraw. At length, as if moved by a sudden impulse, he walked round the table which had hitherto been betwixt them and the Queen, kneeled on one knee, took her hand, kissed it, let it fall, and arose—"Lady," he said, "thou art a noble creature, even though thou hast abused God's choicest gifts. I pay that devotion to thy manliness of spirit, which I would not have paid to the power thou hast long undeservedly wielded—I kneel to Mary Stewart, not to the Queen."

"The Queen and Mary Stewart pity thee alike, Lindesay," said Mary—"alike they pity, and they forgive thee. An honoured soldier hadst thou been by a king's side—leagued with rebels, what art thou but a good blade in the hands of a ruffian?—Farewell, my Lord Ruthven, the smoother but the deeper traitor.—Farewell, Melville—Mayst thou find masters that can understand state policy better, and have the means to reward it more richly, than Mary Stewart.—Farewell, George of Douglas—make your respected grand-dame comprehend that we would be alone for the remainder of the day—God wot, we have need to collect our thoughts."

All bowed and withdrew; but scarce had they entered the vestibule, ere Ruthven and Lindesay were at variance. "Chide not with me, Ruthven," Lindesay was heard to say, in answer to something more indistinctly urged by his colleague—"Chide not with me, for I will not brook

it! You put the hangman's office on me in this matter, and even the very hangman hath leave to ask some pardon of those on whom he does his office. I would I had as deep cause to be this lady's friend as I have to be her enemy—thou shouldst see if I spared limb and life in her quarrel."

"Thou art a sweet minion," said Ruthven, "to fight a lady's quarrel, and all for a bent brow and a tear in the eye! Such toys have been out of thy thoughts this many a year."

"Do me right, Ruthven," said Lindesay. "You are like a polished corslet of steel; it shines more gaudily, but it is not a whit softer—nay, it is five times harder than a Glasgow breastplate of hammered iron. Enough. We know each other."

They descended the stairs, were heard to summon their boats, and the Queen signed to Roland Græme to retire to the vestibule, and leave her with her female attendants.

X.

The course of life to which Mary and her little retinue were doomed, was in the last degree secluded and lonely, varied only as the weather permitted or rendered impossible the Queen's usual walk in the garden or on the battlements. The greater part of the morning she wrought with her ladies at those pieces of needlework, many of which still remain proofs of her indefatigable application. At such hours the page was permitted the freedom of the castle and islet; nay, he was sometimes invited to attend George Douglas when he went a-sporting upon the lake, or on its margin; opportunities of diversion which were only clouded by the remarkable melancholy which always seemed to brood on that gen-

tleman's brow, and to mark his whole demeanour,—a sadness so profound, that Roland never observed him to smile, or to speak any word unconnected with the immediate object of their exercise.

The most pleasant part of Roland's day, was the occasional space which he was permitted to pass in personal attendance on the Queen and her ladies, together with the regular dinner-time, which he always spent with Dame Mary Fleming and Catherine Seyton. At these periods, he had frequent occasion to admire the lively spirit and inventive imagination of the latter damsel, who was unwearied in her contrivances to amuse her mistress, and to banish, for a time at least, the melancholy which preyed on her bosom. She danced, she sung, she recited tales of ancient and modern times, with that heartfelt exertion of talent, of which the pleasure lies not in the vanity of displaying it to others, but in the enthusiastic consciousness that we possess it ourselves. And yet these high accomplishments were mixed with an air of rusticity and harebrained vivacity, which seemed rather to belong to some village maid, the coquette of the ring around the Maypole, than to the high-bred descendant of an ancient baron. A touch of audacity, altogether short of effrontery, and far less approaching to vulgarity, gave as it were a wildness to all that she did; and Mary, while defending her from some of the occasional censures of her grave companion, compared her to a trained singing-bird escaped from a cage, which practises in all the luxuriance of freedom, and in full possession of the greenwood bough, the airs which it had learned during its earlier captivity.

The moments which the page was permitted to pass in the presence of this fascinating creature, danced so rapidly away, that, brief, as they were, they compensated

the weary dulness of all the rest of the day. The space of indulgence, however, was always brief, nor were any private interviews betwixt him and Catherine permitted, or even possible. Whether it were some special precaution respecting the Queen's household, or whether it were her general ideas of propriety, Dame Fleming seemed particularly attentive to prevent the young people from holding any separate correspondence together, and bestowed, for Catherine's sole benefit in this matter, the full stock of prudence and experience which she had acquired, when mother of the Queen's maidens of honour, and by which she had gained their hearty hatred. Casual meetings, however, could not be prevented, unless Catherine had been more desirous of shunning, or Roland Græme less anxious in watching for them. A smile, a gibe, a sarcasm, disarmed of its severity by the arch look with which it was accompanied, was all that time permitted to pass between them on such occasions. But such passing interviews neither afforded means nor opportunity to renew the discussion of the circumstances attending their earlier acquaintance, nor to permit Roland to investigate more accurately the mysterious apparition of the page in the purple velvet cloak at the hostelry of Saint Michael's.

The winter months slipped heavily away, and spring was already advanced, when Roland Græme observed a gradual change in the manners of his fellow-prisoners. Having no business of his own to attend to, and being, like those of his age, education, and degree, sufficiently curious concerning what passed around, he began by degrees to suspect, and finally to be convinced, that there was something in agitation among his companions in captivity, to which they did not desire that he should be privy. Nay, he became almost certain that,

by some means unintelligible to him, Queen Mary held correspondence beyond the walls and waters which surrounded her prison-house, and that she nourished some secret hope of deliverance or escape. In the conversations betwixt her and her attendants, at which he was necessarily present, the Queen could not always avoid shewing that she was acquainted with the events which were passing abroad in the world, and which he only heard through her report. He observed that she wrote more and worked less than had been her former custom, and that, as if desirous to lull suspicion asleep, she changed her manner towards the Lady Lochleven into one more gracious, and which seemed to express a resigned submission to her lot. "They think I am blind," he said to himself, "and that I am unfit to be trusted because I am so young, or it may be because I was sent hither by the Regent. Well!—be it so—they may be glad to confide in me in the long run; and Catherine Seyton, for as saucy as she is, may find me as safe a confident as that sullen Douglas, whom she is always running after. It may be they are angry with me for listening to Master Elias Henderson; but it was their own fault for sending me there; and if the man speaks truth and good sense, and preaches only the word of God, he is as likely to be right as either Pope or Councils."

It is probable that in this last conjecture, Roland Græme had hit upon the real cause why the ladies had not intrusted him with their counsels. He had of late had several conferences with Henderson on the subject of religion, and had given him to understand that he stood in need of his instructions, although he had not thought there was either prudence or necessity for confessing that hitherto he had held the tenets of the Church of Rome.

[It was some months after the events just related that an attempt was made to effect the escape of Queen Mary. One evening Roland Græme repaired to the garden to muse in solitude. There he fell asleep in an arbour, till he was awakened by the castle bell, which always tolled at ten o'clock as the signal for locking the gates. He hastened to the wicket, by which the garden communicated with the building, but reached it only in time to hear the heavy bolt drawn within. Old Dryfesdale, the steward, persistently refused to open the door, and tauntingly said: "the cool air will advantage your hot blood." Roland then returned to the arbour, wrapped himself in his cloak, and tried to sleep, but he soon heard the voices of two persons in the garden. His first thought was of supernatural beings, his next upon some attempt on the part of Queen Mary's friends and followers, his last was that George Douglas, possessed of the keys and having the means of ingress and egress at pleasure, was availing himself of his office to hold a rendezvous with Catherine Seyton in the castle garden. He was confirmed in this opinion by the tone of the voice, which asked in a low whisper "whether all was ready?"]

XI.

Roland Græme, availing himself of a breach in the holly screen, and of the assistance of the full moon, which was now arisen, had a perfect opportunity, himself unobserved, to reconnoitre the persons and the motions of those by whom his rest had been thus unexpectedly disturbed; and his observations confirmed his jealous apprehensions. They stood together in close and earnest conversation within four yards of the place of his retreat, and he could easily recognize the tall form and deep voice of Douglas, and the no less remarkable dress and tone of the page at the hostelry of Saint Michael's.

"I have been at the door of the page's apartment," said Douglas, "but he is not there, or he will not answer. It is fast bolted on the inside, as is the custom, and we cannot pass through it—and what his silence may bode I know not."

"You have trusted him too far," said the other; "a feather-headed coxcomb, upon whose changeable mind and hot brain there is no making an abiding impression."

"It was not I who was willing to trust him," said Douglas; "but I was assured he would prove friendly when called upon—for—" Here he spoke so low that Roland lost the tenor of his words, which was the more provoking, as he was fully aware that he was himself the subject of their conversation.

"Nay," replied the stranger, more aloud, "I have on my side put him off with fair words, which make fools fain—but now, if you distrust him at the push, deal with him with your dagger, and so make open passage."

"That were too rash," said Douglas; "and, besides, as I told you, the door of his apartment is shut and bolted. I will essay again to waken him."

Græme instantly comprehended, that the ladies, having been somehow made aware of his being in the garden, had secured the door of the outer room in which he usually slept, as a sort of sentinel upon that only access to the Queen's apartments. But then, how came Catherine Seyton to be abroad, if the Queen and the other lady were still within their chambers, and the access to them locked and bolted?—"I will be instantly at the bottom of these mysteries," he said, "and then thank Mistress Catherine, if this be really she, for the kind use which she exhorted Douglas to make of his dagger—they seek me, as I comprehend, and they shall not seek me in vain."

Douglas had by this time re-entered the castle by the wicket, which was now open. The stranger stood alone in the garden walk, his arms folded on his breast, and his eyes cast impatiently up to the moon, as if accusing her of betraying him by the magnificence of her lustre. In a moment Roland Græme stood before him—"A

goodly night," he said, "Mistress Catherine, for a young lady to stray forth in disguise, and to meet with men in an orchard!"

"Hush!" said the stranger page, "hush, thou foolish patch, and tell us in a word if thou art friend or foe."

"How should I be friend to one who deceives me by fair words, and who would have Douglas deal with me with his poniard?" replied Roland.

"The fiend receive George of Douglas and thee too, thou born madcap and sworn marplot!" said the other; "we shall be discovered, and then death is the word."

"Catherine," said the page, "you have dealt falsely and cruelly with me, and the moment of explanation is now come—neither it nor you shall escape me."

"Madman!" said the stranger, "I am neither Kate nor Catherine—the moon shines bright enough surely to know the hart from the hind."

"That shift shall not serve you, fair mistress," said the page, laying hold on the lap of the stranger's cloak; "this time, at least, I will know with whom I deal."

"Unhand me," said she, endeavouring to extricate herself from his grasp; and in a tone where anger seemed to contend with a desire to laugh, "use you so little discretion towards a daughter of Seyton?"

But as Roland, encouraged perhaps by her risibility to suppose his violence was not unpardonably offensive, kept hold on her mantle, she said, in a sterner tone of un-mixed resentment,—“Madman, let me go!—there is life and death in this moment—I would not willingly hurt thee, and yet beware!”

As she spoke she made a sudden effort to escape, and in doing so, a pistol, which she carried in her hand or about her person, went off.

This warlike sound instantly awakened the well-warded

castle. The warder blew his horn, and began to toll the castle bell, crying out at the same time, "Fie, treason! treason! cry all! cry all!"

The apparition of Catherine Seyton, which the page had let loose in the first moment of astonishment, vanished in darkness, but the splash of oars was heard, and in a second or two five or six harquebusses and a falconet were fired from the battlements of the castle successively, as if levelled at some object on the water. Confounded with these incidents, no way for Catherine's protection (supposing her to be in the boat which he had heard put from the shore) occurred to Roland, save to have recourse to George of Douglas. He hastened for this purpose towards the apartment of the Queen, whence he heard loud voices and much trampling of feet. When he entered he found himself added to a confused and astonished group, which, assembled in that apartment, stood gazing upon each other. At the upper end of the room stood the Queen, equipped as for a journey, and attended not only by the Lady Fleming, but by the omnipresent Catherine Seyton, dressed in the habit of her own sex, and bearing in her hand the casket in which Mary kept such jewels as she had been permitted to retain. At the other end of the hall was the Lady of Lochleven, hastily dressed, as one startled from slumber by the sudden alarm, and surrounded by domestics, some bearing torches, others holding naked swords, partisans, pistols, or such other weapons as they had caught up in the hurry of a night alarm. Betwixt these two parties stood George of Douglas, his arms folded on his breast, his eyes bent on the ground, like a criminal who knows not how to deny, yet continues unwilling to avow, the guilt in which he has been detected.

"Speak, George of Douglas," said the Lady of Loch-

leven; "speak, and clear the horrid suspicion which rests on thy name. Say, 'A Douglas was never faithless to his trust, and I am a Douglas.' Say this, my dearest son, and it is all I ask thee to say to clear thy name, even under such a foul charge. Say it was but the wile of these unhappy women, and this false boy, which plotted an escape so fatal to Scotland—so destructive to thy father's house."

"Madam," said old Dryfesdale the steward, "this much do I say for this silly page, that he could not be accessory to unlocking the doors, since I myself this night bolted him out of the castle. Whoever limned this nightpiece, the lad's share in it seems to have been small."

"Thou liest, Dryfesdale," said the lady, "and wouldst throw the blame on thy master's house, to save the worthless life of a gipsy boy."

"His death were more desirable to me than his life," answered the steward sullenly; "but the truth is the truth."

At these words Douglas raised his head, drew up his figure to its full height, and spoke boldly and sedately, as one whose resolution was taken. "Let no life be endangered for me. I alone——"

"Douglas," said the Queen, interrupting him, "art thou mad? Speak not, I charge you."

"Madam," he replied, bowing with the deepest respect, "gladly would I obey your commands, but they must have a victim, and let it be the true one.—Yes, madam," he continued, addressing the Lady of Lochleven, "I alone am guilty in this matter. If the word of a Douglas has yet any weight with you, believe me that this boy is innocent; and on your conscience I charge you, do him no wrong; nor let the Queen suffer hardship for embracing the opportunity of freedom which sincere loyalty

—which a sentiment yet deeper—offered to her acceptance. Yes! I had planned the escape of the most beautiful, the most persecuted of women; and far from regretting that I for a while deceived the malice of her enemies, I glory in it, and am most willing to yield up life itself in her cause.”

“Now may God have compassion on my age,” said the Lady of Lochleven, “and enable me to bear this load of affliction? O princess, born in a luckless hour, when will you cease to be the instrument of seduction and of ruin to all who approach you? O ancient house of Lochleven, famed so long for birth and honour, evil was the hour which brought the deceiver under thy roof!”

“Say not so, madam,” replied her grandson; “the old honours of the Douglas line will be outshone, when one of its descendants dies for the most injured of queens—for the most lovely of women.”

“Douglas,” said the Queen, “must I at this moment—ay, even at this moment, when I may lose a faithful subject for ever, chide thee for forgetting what is due to me as thy queen?”

“Wretched boy,” said the distracted Lady of Lochleven, “hast thou fallen even thus far into the snare of this Moabitish woman?—hast thou bartered thy name, thy allegiance, thy knightly oath, thy duty to thy parents, thy country, and thy God, for a feigned tear, or a sickly smile, from lips which flattered the infirm Francis—lured to death the idiot Darnley—read luscious poetry with the minion Chastelar—mingled in the lays of love which were sung by the beggar Rizzio—and which were joined in rapture to those of the foul and licentious Bothwell?”

“Blaspheme not, madam!” said Douglas;—“nor you, fair queen, and virtuous as fair, chide at this moment the presumption of thy vassal!—Think not that the mere

devotion of a subject could have moved me to the part I have been performing. Well you deserve that each of your lieges should die for you; but I have done more—have done that to which love alone could compel a Douglas—I have dissembled. Farewell, then, queen of all hearts, and empress of that of Douglas!—When you are freed from this vile bondage—as freed you shall be, if justice remains in heaven—and when you load with honours and titles the happy man who shall deliver you, cast one thought on him whose heart would have despised every reward for a kiss of your hand—cast one thought on his fidelity, and drop one tear on his grave.” And throwing himself at her feet, he seized her hand, and pressed it to his lips.

“This before my face!” exclaimed the Lady of Lochleven—“Tear them asunder, and put him under strict ward! Seize him, upon your lives!” she added, seeing that her attendants looked on each other with hesitation.

“They are doubtful,” said Mary. “Save thyself, Douglas, I command thee!”

He started up from the floor, and only exclaiming, “My life or death are yours, and at your disposal!”—drew his sword, and broke through those who stood betwixt him and the door. The enthusiasm of his onset was too sudden and too lively to have been opposed by anything short of the most decided opposition; and as he was both loved and feared by his father’s vassals, none of them would offer him actual injury.

XII.

The Lady of Lochleven stood astonished at his sudden escape—“Am I surrounded,” she said, “by traitors? Upon him, villains!—pursue, stab, cut him down!”

"He cannot leave the island, madam," said Dryfesdale, interfering; "I have the key of the boat-chain."

But two or three voices of those who pursued from curiosity, or command of their mistress, exclaimed from below, that he had cast himself into the lake.

"Brave Douglas still!" exclaimed the Queen. "Oh, true and noble heart, that prefers death to imprisonment!"

"Fire upon him!" said the Lady of Lochleven; "if there be here a true servant of his father, let him shoot the runagate dead, and let the lake cover our shame!"

The report of a gun or two was heard, but they were probably shot rather to obey the lady, than with any purpose of hitting the mark; and Randal immediately entering, said that Master George had been taken up by a boat from the castle, which lay at a little distance.

"Man a barge, and pursue them!" said the lady.

"It were quite vain," said Randal; "by this time they are half-way to shore, and a cloud has come over the moon."

"And has the traitor then escaped?" said the lady, pressing her hands against her forehead with a gesture of despair; "the honour of our house is for ever gone, and all will be deemed accomplices in this base treachery."

"Lady of Lochleven," said Mary, advancing towards her, "you have this night cut off my fairest hopes, you have turned my expected freedom into bondage, and dashed away the cup of joy in the very instant I was advancing it to my lips—and yet I feel for your sorrow the pity that you deny to mine. Gladly would I comfort you if I might; but as I may not, I would at least part from you in charity."

"Away, proud woman!" said the lady; "who ever knew so well as thou to deal the deepest wounds under

the pretence of kindness and courtesy? Who, since the great traitor, could ever so betray with a kiss?"

"Lady Douglas of Lochleven," said the Queen, "in this moment thou canst not offend me—no, not even by thy coarse and unwomanly language, held to me in the presence of menials and armed retainers. I have this night owed so much to one member of the house of Lochleven, as to cancel whatever its mistress can do or say in the wildness of her passion."

"We are bounden to you, princess," said Lady Lochleven, putting a strong constraint on herself, and passing from her tone of violence to that of bitter irony; "our poor house hath been but seldom graced with royal smiles, and will hardly, with my choice, exchange their rough honesty for such court-honour as Mary of Scotland has now to bestow."

"They," replied Mary, "who knew so well how to *take*, may think themselves excused from the obligation implied in receiving. And that I have now little to offer, is the fault of the Douglasses and their allies."

"Fear nothing, madam," replied the Lady of Lochleven, in the same bitter tone, "you retain an exchequer which neither your own prodigality can drain, nor your offended country deprive you of. While you have fair words and delusive smiles at command, you need no other bribes to lure youth to folly."

The Queen cast not an ungratified glance on a large mirror, which, hanging on one side of the apartment, and illuminated by the torch-light, reflected her beautiful face and person. "Our hostess grows complaisant," she said, "my Fleming; we had not thought that grief and captivity had left us so well stored with that sort of wealth which ladies prize most dearly."

"Your Grace will drive this severe woman frantic,"

said Fleming in a low tone. "On my knees I implore you to remember she is already dreadfully offended, and that we are in her power."

"I will not spare her, Fleming," answered the Queen; "it is against my nature. She returned my honest sympathy with insult and abuse, and I will gall her in return. If her words are too blunt for answer, let her use her poniard if she dare!"

"The Lady Lochleven," said the Lady Fleming aloud, "would surely do well now to withdraw, and to leave her Grace to repose."

"Ay," replied the lady, "or to leave her Grace, and her Grace's minions, to think what silly fly they may next wrap their meshes about. My eldest son is a widower—were he not more worthy the flattering hopes with which you have seduced his brother? True, the yoke of marriage has been already thrice fitted on, but the church of Rome calls it a sacrament, and its votaries may deem it one in which they cannot too often participate."

"And the votaries of the church of Geneva," replied Mary, colouring with indignation, "as they deem marriage *no* sacrament, are said at times to dispense with the holy ceremony." Then, as if afraid of the consequences of this home allusion to the errors of Lady Lochleven's early life, the Queen added, "Come, my Fleming, we grace her too much by this altercation; we will to our sleeping apartment. If she would disturb us again to-night, she must cause the door to be forced." So saying, she retired to her bedroom, followed by her two women.

Lady Lochleven, stunned as it were by this last sarcasm, and not the less deeply incensed that she had drawn it upon herself, remained like a statue on the spot which she had occupied when she received an affront

so flagrant. Dryfesdale and Randal endeavoured to rouse her to recollection by questions.

"What is your honourable ladyship's pleasure in the premises?"

"Shall we not double the sentinels, and place one upon the boats and another in the garden?" said Randal.

"Would you that despatches were sent to Sir William at Edinburgh, to acquaint him with what has happened?" demanded Dryfesdale; "and ought not the place of Kinross to be alarmed, lest there be force upon the shores of the lake?"

"Do all as thou wilt," said the lady, collecting herself, and about to depart. "Thou hast the name of a good soldier, Dryfesdale, take all precautions. Sacred Heaven! that I should be thus openly insulted!"

"Would it be your pleasure," said Dryfesdale, hesitating, "that this person—this lady—be more severely restrained?"

"No, vassal!" answered the lady indignantly, "my revenge stoops not to so low a gratification. But I will have more worthy vengeance, or the tomb of my ancestors shall cover my shame!"

"And you shall have it, madam," replied Dryfesdale. "Ere two suns go down, you shall term yourself amply revenged."

The lady made no answer—perhaps did not hear his words, as she presently left the apartment. By the command of Dryfesdale, the rest of the attendants were dismissed, some to do the duty of guard, others to their repose. The steward himself remained after they had all departed; and Roland Græme, who was alone in the apartment, was surprised to see the old soldier advance towards him with an air of greater cordiality than he had ever before assumed to him, but which sat ill on his scowling features.

"Youth," he said, "I have done thee some wrong—it is thine own fault, for thy behaviour hath seemed as light to me as the feather thou wearest in thy hat; and surely thy fantastic apparel, and idle humour of mirth and folly, have made me construe thee something harshly. But I saw this night from my casement, (as I looked out to see how thou hadst disposed of thyself in the garden,) I saw, I say, the true efforts which thou didst make to detain the companion of the perfidy of him who is no longer worthy to be called by his father's name, but must be cut off from his house like a rotten branch. I was just about to come to thy assistance when the pistol went off; and the warder (a false knave whom I suspect to be bribed for the nonce) saw himself forced to give the alarm, which, perchance, till then, he had wilfully withheld. To atone, therefore, for my injustice towards you, I would willingly render you a courtesy, if you would accept of it from my hands."

"May I first crave to know what it is?" replied the page.

"Simply to carry the news of this discovery to Holyrood, where thou mayest do thyself much grace, as well with the Earl of Morton and the Regent himself, as with Sir William Douglas, seeing thou hast seen the matter from end to end, and borne faithful part therein. The making thine own fortune will be thus lodged in thine own hand, when I trust thou wilt estrange thyself from foolish vanities, and learn to walk in this world as one who thinks upon the next."

"Sir Steward," said Roland Græme, "I thank you for your courtesy, but I may not do your errand. I pass that I am the Queen's sworn servant, and may not be of counsel against her. But, setting this apart, methinks it were a bad road to Sir William of Lochleven's favour, to

be the first to tell him of his son's defection—neither would the Regent be over well pleased to hear the infidelity of his vassal, nor Morton to learn the falsehood of his kinsman."

"Um!" said the steward, making that inarticulate sound which expresses surprise mingled with displeasure. "Nay, then, even fly where ye list; for, giddy-pated as ye may be, you know how to bear you in the world."

"I will show you my esteem is less selfish than ye think for," said the page; "for I hold truth and mirth to be better than gravity and cunning—ay, and in the end to be a match for them. You never loved me less, Sir Steward, than you do at this moment. I know you will give me no real confidence, and I am resolved to accept no false protestations as current coin. Resume your old course—suspect me as much and watch me as closely as you will, I bid you defiance—you have met with your match."

"By Heaven, young man," said the steward, with a look of bitter malignity, "if thou darest to attempt any treachery towards the House of Lochleven, thy head shall blacken in the sun from the warder's turret!"

"He cannot commit treachery who refuses trust," said the page; "and for my head, it stands as securely on my shoulders, as on any turret that ever mason built."

"Farewell, thou prating and speckled pie," said Dryfesdale, "that art so vain of thine idle tongue and variegated coat! Beware trap and lime-twigg."

"And fare thee well, thou hoarse old raven," answered the page; "thy solemn flight, sable hue, and deep croak, are no charms against bird-bolt or hail-shot, and that thou mayst find—it is open war betwixt us, each for the cause of our mistress, and God show the right!"

"Amen, and defend his own people!" said the steward. "I will let my mistress know what addition thou hast

made to this mess of traitors. Good-night, Monsieur Featherpate."

"Good-night, Seignior Sowersby," replied the page; and, when the old man departed, he betook himself to rest.

XIII.

However weary Roland Græme might be of the Castle of Lochleven—however much he might wish that the plan for Mary's escape had been perfected, I question if he ever awoke with more pleasing feelings than on the morning after George Douglas's plan for accomplishing her deliverance had been frustrated. In the first place, he had the clearest conviction that the affections of Douglas were fixed, not on Catherine Seyton, but on the Queen; and in the second place, from the sort of explanation which had taken place betwixt the steward and him, he felt himself at liberty, without any breach of honour towards the family of Lochleven, to contribute his best aid to any scheme which should in future be formed for the Queen's escape; and, independently of the good-will which he himself had to the enterprise, he knew he could find no surer road to the favour of Catherine Seyton. He now sought but an opportunity to inform her that he had dedicated himself to this task, and fortune was propitious in affording him one which was unusually favourable.

At the ordinary hour of breakfast, it was introduced by the steward with his usual forms, who, as soon as it was placed on the board in the inner apartment, said to Roland Græme, with a glance of sarcastic import, "I leave you, my young sir, to do the office of sewer—it has been too long rendered to the Lady Mary by one belonging to the house of Douglas."

"Were it the prime and principal who ever bore the name," said Roland, "the office were an honour to him."

The steward departed without replying to this bravade otherwise than by a dark look of scorn. Græme, thus left alone, busied himself, as one engaged in a labour of love, to imitate, as well as he could, the grace and courtesy with which George of Douglas was wont to render his ceremonial service at meals to the Queen of Scotland. There was more than youthful vanity, there was a generous devotion in the feeling with which he took up the task, as a brave soldier assumes the place of a comrade who has fallen in the front of battle. "I am now," he said, "their only champion; and, come weal, come wo, I will be, to the best of my skill and power, as faithful, as trustworthy, as brave, as any Douglas of them all could have been."

At this moment Catherine Seyton entered alone, contrary to her custom; and, not less contrary to her custom, she entered with her kerchief at her eyes. Roland Græme approached her with beating heart and with downcast eyes, and asked her, in a low and hesitating voice, whether the Queen were well?

"Can you suppose it?" said Catherine. "Think you her heart and body are framed of steel and iron, to endure the cruel disappointment of yester even, and the infamous taunts of yonder puritanic hag?—Would to God that I were a man, to aid her more effectually!"

"If those who carry pistols and batons and poniards," said the page, "are not men they are at least Amazons; and that is as formidable."

"You are welcome to the flash of your wit, sir," replied the damsel; "I am neither in spirits to enjoy nor to reply to it."

"Well, then," said the page, "list to me in all serious

truth. And, first, let me say that the gear last night had been smother had you taken me into your counsels."

"And so we meant; but who could have guessed that Master Page should choose to pass all night in the garden, like some moon-stricken knight in a Spanish romance, instead of being in his bedroom when Douglas came to hold communication with him on our project?"

"And why," said the page, "defer to so late a moment so important a confidence?"

"Because your communications with Henderson (the chaplain) and, with pardon, the natural impetuosity and fickleness of your disposition made us dread to intrust you with a secret of such consequence till the last moment."

"And why at the last moment?" said the page, offended at this frank avowal; "why at that or any other moment, since I had the misfortune to incur so much suspicion?"

"Nay—now you are angry again," said Catherine; "and to serve you aright I should break off this talk; but I will be magnanimous, and answer your question. Know, then, our reason for trusting you was twofold. In the first place, we could scarce avoid it, since you slept in the room through which we had to pass. In the second place—"

"Nay," said the page, "you may dispense with a second reason, when the first makes your confidence in me a case of necessity."

"Good now, hold thy peace," said Catherine. "In the second place, as I said before, there is one foolish person among us, who believes that Roland Græme's heart is warm, though his head is giddy—that his blood is pure, though it boils too hastily—and that his faith and honour are true as the load-star, though his tongue sometimes is far less than discreet."

This avowal Catherine repeated in a low tone, with her eyes fixed on the floor, as if she shunned the glance of Roland while she suffered it to escape her lips—"And this single friend," exclaimed the youth in rapture; "this only one who would do justice to the poor Roland Græme, and whose own generous heart taught her to distinguish between follies of the brain and faults of the heart—Will you not tell me, dearest Catherine, to whom I owe my most grateful, my most heartfelt thanks?"

"Nay," said Catherine, with her eyes still fixed on the ground, "if your own heart tell you not—"

"Dearest Catherine!" said the page, seizing upon her hand, and kneeling on one knee.

"If your own heart, I say, tell you not," said Catherine, gently disengaging her hand, "it is very ungrateful; for since the maternal kindness of the Lady Fleming—"

The page started on his feet. "By Heaven, Catherine, your tongue wears as many disguises as your person! But you only mock me, cruel girl. You know the Lady Fleming has no more regard for any one, than hath the forlorn princess who is wrought into yonder piece of old figured court tapestry."

"It may be so," said Catherine Seyton, "but you should not speak so loud."

"Pshaw!" answered the page, but at the same time lowering his voice, "she cares for no one but herself and the Queen. And you know, besides, there is no one of you whose opinion I value, if I have not your own. No—not that of Queen Mary herself."

"The more shame for you, if it be so," said Catherine, with great composure.

"Nay, but, fair Catherine," said the page, "why will you thus damp my ardour, when I am devoting myself, body and soul, to the cause of your mistress?"

"It is because in doing so," said Catherine, "you debase a cause so noble, by naming along with it any lower or more selfish motive. Believe me," she said, with kindling eyes, and while the blood mantled on her cheek, "they think vilely and falsely of women—I mean of those who deserve the name—who deem that they love the gratification of their vanity, or the mean purpose of engrossing a lover's admiration and affection, better than they love the virtue and honour of the man they may be brought to prefer. He that serves his religion, his prince, and his country, with ardour and devotion, need not plead his cause with the commonplace rant of romantic passion—the woman whom he honours with his love becomes his debtor, and her corresponding affection is engaged to repay his glorious toil."

"You hold a glorious prize for such toil," said the youth, bending his eyes on her with enthusiasm.

"Only a heart which knows how to value it," said Catherine. "He that should free this injured Princess from these dungeons, and set her at liberty among her loyal and warlike nobles, whose hearts are burning to welcome her—where is the maiden in Scotland whom the love of such a hero would not honour, were she sprung from the blood royal of the land, and he the offspring of the poorest cottager that ever held a plough?"

"I am determined," said Roland, "to take the adventure. Tell me first, however, fair Catherine, and speak it as if you were confessing to the priest—this poor Queen, I know she is unhappy—but Catherine, do you hold her innocent? She is accused of murder."

"Do I hold the lamb guilty, because it is assailed by the wolf?" answered Catherine; "do I hold yonder sun polluted, because an earth-damp sullies his beams?"

The page sighed and looked down. "Would my con-

viction were as deep as thine? But one thing is clear, that in this captivity she hath wrong—She rendered herself up on a capitulation, and the terms have been refused her—I will embrace her quarrel to the death!”

“Will you—will you, indeed?” said Catherine, taking his hand in her turn. “Oh, be but firm in mind, as thou art bold in deed and quick in resolution; keep but thy plighted faith, and after ages shall honour thee as the saviour of Scotland!”

“But when I have toiled successfully to win that Leah, Honour, thou wilt not, my Catherine,” said the page, “condemn me to a new term of service for that Rachel, Love?”

“Of that,” said Catherine, again extricating her hand from his grasp, “we shall have full time to speak; but Honour is the elder sister, and must be won the first.”

“I may not win her,” answered the page; “but I will venture fairly for her, and man can do no more. And know, fair Catherine,—for you shall see the very secret thought of my heart,—that not Honour only—not only that other and fairer sister, whom you frown on me for so much as mentioning—but the stern commands of duty also, compel me to aid the Queen’s deliverance.”

“Indeed!” said Catherine; “you were wont to have doubts on that matter.”

“Ay, but her life was not then threatened,” replied Roland.

“And is it now more endangered than heretofore?” asked Catherine Seyton, in anxious terror.

“Be not alarmed,” said the page; “but you heard the terms on which your royal mistress parted with the Lady of Lochleven?”

“Too well—but too well,” said Catherine; “alas! that

she cannot rule her princely resentment, and refrain from encounters like these!"

"That hath passed betwixt them," said Roland, "for which woman never forgives woman. I saw the Lady's brow turn pale, and then black, when before all the menzie, and in her moment of power, the Queen humbled her to the dust by taxing her with her shame. And I heard the oath of deadly resentment and revenge which she muttered in the ear of one, who by his answer will, I judge, be but too ready an executioner of her will."

"You terrify me," said Catherine.

"Do not so take it—call up the masculine part of your spirit—we will counteract and defeat her plans, be they dangerous as they may. Why do you look upon me thus and weep?"

"Alas!" said Catherine, "because you stand there before me a living and breathing man, in all the adventurous glow and enterprise of youth, yet still possessing the frolic spirits of childhood—there you stand, full alike of generous enterprise and childish recklessness; and if to-day, or to-morrow, or some such brief space, you lie a mangled and lifeless corpse upon the floor of these hateful dungeons, who but Catherine Seyton will be the cause of your brave and gay career being broken short as you start from the goal? Alas! she whom you have chosen to twine your wreath, may too probably have to work your shroud!"

"And be it so, Catherine," said the page, in the full glow of youthful enthusiasm; "and *do* thou work my shroud! and if thou grace it with such tears as fall now at the thought, it will honour my remains more than an earl's mantle would my living body. But shame on this faintness of heart! the time craves a firmer mood—Be a woman, Catherine, or rather be a man—thou canst be a man if thou wilt."

Catherine dried her tears, and endeavoured to smile.

“You must not ask me,” she said, “about that which so much disturbs your mind; you shall know all in time—nay, you should know all now, but that—Hush! here comes the Queen.”

XIV.

Mary entered from her apartment, paler than usual, and apparently exhausted by a sleepless night, and by the painful thoughts which had ill-supplied the place of repose; yet the languor of her looks was so far from impairing her beauty, that it only substituted the frail delicacy of the lovely woman for the majestic grace of the Queen. Contrary to her wont, her toilet had been very hastily despatched, and her hair, which was usually dressed by Lady Fleming with great care, escaping from beneath the head-tire, which had been hastily adjusted, fell in long and luxuriant tresses of Nature's own curling, over a neck and bosom which were somewhat less carefully veiled than usual.

As she stepped over the threshold of her apartment, Catherine hastily drying her tears, ran to meet her royal mistress, and having first kneeled at her feet, and kissed her hand, instantly rose, and placing herself on the other side of the Queen, seemed anxious to divide with the Lady Fleming the honour of supporting and assisting her. The page on his part, advanced and put in order the chair of state, which she usually occupied, and having placed the cushion and footstool for her accommodation, stepped back, and stood ready for service in the place usually occupied by his predecessor, the young Seneschal. Mary's eye rested an instant on him, and could not but remark the change of persons. Hers was not the female heart which could refuse compassion, at least, to a gallant

youth who had suffered in her cause, although he had been guided in his enterprise by a too presumptuous passion; and the words "Poor Douglas!" escaped from her lips, perhaps unconsciously, as she leant herself back in her chair, and put the kerchief to her eyes.

"Yes, gracious madam," said Catherine, assuming a cheerful manner, in order to cheer her sovereign, "our gallant Knight is indeed banished—the adventure was not reserved for him: but he has left behind him a youthful Esquire, as much devoted to your Grace's service, and who, by me, makes you tender of his hand and sword."

"If they may in aught avail your Grace," said Roland Græme, bowing profoundly.

"Alas!" said the Queen, "what needs this, Catherine?—why prepare new victims to be involved in, and overwhelmed by, my cruel fortune?—were we not better cease to struggle, and ourselves sink in the tide without farther resistance, than thus drag into destruction with us every generous heart which makes an effort in our favour?—I have had but too much of plot and intrigue around me, since I was stretched an orphan child in my very cradle, while contending nobles strove which should rule in the name of the unconscious innocent. Surely time it were that all this busy and most dangerous coil should end. Let me call my prison a convent, and my seclusion a voluntary sequestration of myself from the world and its ways."

"Speak not thus, madam, before your faithful servants," said Catherine, "to discourage their zeal at once, and to break their hearts. Daughter of Kings, be not in this hour so unkingly—Come, Roland, and let us, the youngest of her followers, show ourselves worthy of her cause—let us kneel before her footstool, and implore her to be

her own magnanimous self." And leading Roland Græme to the Queen's seat, they both kneeled down before her. Mary raised herself in her chair, and sat erect, while, extending one hand to be kissed by the page, she arranged with the other the clustering locks which shaded the bold yet lovely brow of the high-spirited Catherine.

"Alas! *ma mignône*," she said, for sô in fondness she often called her young attendant, "that you should thus desperately mix with my unhappy fate the fortune of your young lives? Are they not a lovely couple, my Fleming? and is it not heart-rending to think that I must be their ruin?"

"Not so," said Roland Græme, "it is we, gracious Sovereign, who will be your deliverers."

"*Ex oribus parvulorum!*" said the Queen, looking upward; "if it is by the mouth of these children that Heaven calls me to resume the stately thoughts which become my birth and my rights, thou wilt grant them thy protection, and to me the power of rewarding their zeal!" Then turning to Fleming, she instantly added—"Thou knowest, my friend, whether to make those who have served me happy, was not ever Mary's favourite pastime. When I have been rebuked by the stern preachers of the Calvinistic heresy—when I have seen the fierce countenances of my nobles averted from me, has it not been because I mixed in the harmless pleasures of the young and gay, and rather for the sake of their happiness than my own, have mingled in the masque, the song, or the dance, with the youth of my household? Well, I repent not of it—though Knox termed it sin, and Morton degradation—I was happy, because I saw happiness around me; and woe betide the wretched jealousy that can extract guilt out of the overflowings of an unguarded gaiety?—Fleming, if we are restored to

our throne, shall we not have one blithesome day at a blithesome bridal, of which we must now name neither the bride nor the bridegroom? but that bridegroom shall have the barony of Blairgowrie, a fair gift even for a Queen to give, and that bride's chaplet shall be twined with the fairest pearls that ever were found in the depths of Lochlomond; and thou thyself, Mary Fleming, the best dresser of tresses that ever busked the tresses of a Queen, and who would scorn to touch those of any woman of lower rank,—thou thyself shalt, for my love, twine them into the bride's tresses.—Look, my Fleming, suppose them such clustered locks as those of our Catherine, they would not put shame upon thy skill."

So saying, she passed her hand fondly over the head of her youthful favourite, while her more aged attendant replied despondently, "Alas! madam, your thoughts stray far from home."

"They do, my Fleming," said the Queen; "but is it well or kind in you to call them back?—God knows they have kept the perch this night but too closely.—Come, I will recall the gay vision, were it but to punish them. Yes, at that blithesome bridal, Mary herself shall forget the weight of sorrows, and the toil of state, and herself once more lead a measure. At whose wedding was it that we last danced, my Fleming? I think care has troubled my memory—yet something of it I should remember—canst thou not aid me?—I know thou canst."

"Alas! madam," replied the lady—

"What!" said Mary, "wilt thou not help us so far? this is a peevish adherence to thine own graver opinion, which holds our talk as folly. But thou art court-bred, and wilt well understand me when I say, the Queen commands Lady Fleming to tell her where she led the last *branle*."

With a face deadly pale, and a mien as if she were about to sink into the earth, the court-bred dame, no longer daring to refuse obedience, faltered out—"Gracious Lady—if my memory err not—it was at a masque in Holyrood—at the marriage of Sebastian."

XV.

The unhappy Queen, who had hitherto listened with a melancholy smile, provoked by the reluctance with which the Lady Fleming brought out her story, at this ill-fated word interrupted her with a shriek so wild and loud that the vaulted apartment rang, and both Roland and Catherine sprung to their feet in the utmost terror and alarm. Meantime, Mary seemed, by the train of horrible ideas thus suddenly excited, surprised not only beyond self-command, but for the moment beyond the verge of reason.

"Traitor!" she said to the Lady Fleming, "thou wouldst slay thy sovereign.—Call my French guards—*à moi! à moi! mes Français!*—I am beset with traitors in mine own palace—they have murdered my husband. Rescue! rescue! for the Queen of Scotland!" She started up from her chair—her features, late so exquisitely lovely in their paleness, now inflamed with the fury of frenzy, and resembling those of a Bellona. "We will take the field ourself," she said; "warn the city—warn Lothian and Fife—saddle our Spanish barb, and bid French Paris see our petronel be charged! Better to die at the head of our brave Scotsmen, like our grandfather at Flodden, than of a broken heart, like our ill-starred father!"

"Be patient—be composed, dearest Sovereign," said Catherine; and then addressing Lady Fleming angrily,

she added, "How could you say aught that reminded her of her husband?"

The word reached the ear of the unhappy Princess, who caught it up, speaking with great rapidity. "Husband!—what husband? Not his most Christian Majesty—he is ill at ease—he cannot mount on horseback. Not him of the Lennox—but it was the Duke of Orkney thou wouldst say."

"For God's love, madam, be patient!" said the Lady Fleming.

But the Queen's excited imagination could by no entreaty be diverted from its course. "Bid him come hither to our aid," she said, "and bring with him his lambs, as he calls them. Fie! how swart they are, and how they smell of sulphur! What! closeted with Morton? Nay, if the Douglas and the Hepburn hatch the complot together, the bird, when it breaks the shell, will scare Scotland. Will it not, my Fleming?"

"She grows wilder and wilder," said Fleming; "we have too many hearers for these strange words."

"Roland," said Catherine, "in the name of God, be-gone! You cannot aid us here—Leave us to deal with her alone—Away—away!"

She thrust him to the door of the anteroom; yet even when he had entered that apartment, and shut the door, he could still hear the Queen talk in a loud and determined tone, as if giving forth orders, until at length the voice died away in a feeble and continued lamentation.

At this crisis Catherine entered the anteroom. "Be not too anxious," she said, "the crisis is now over; but keep the door fast—let no one enter until she is more composed."

"In the name of God, what does this mean?" said the

page; "or what was there in the Lady Fleming's words to excite so wild a transport?"

"Oh, the Lady Fleming, the Lady Fleming," said Catherine, repeating the words impatiently; "the Lady Fleming is a fool—she loves her mistress, yet knows so little how to express her love, that were the Queen to ask her for very poison, she would deem it a point of duty not to resist her commands. I could have torn her starched head-tire from her formal head—The Queen should have as soon had the heart out of my body, as the word Sebastian out of my lips—That that piece of weaved tapestry should be a woman, and yet not have wit enough to tell a lie!"

"And what was this story of Sebastian?" said the page. "By Heaven, Catherine, you are all riddles alike!"

"You are as great a fool as Fleming," returned the impatient maiden; "know ye not, that on the night of Henry Darnley's murder, and at the blowing up of the Kirk of Field, the Queen's absence was owing to her attending on a masque at Holyrood, given by her to grace the marriage of this same Sebastian, who, himself a favoured servant, married one of her female attendants, who was near to her person?"

"By St. Giles," said the page, "I wonder not at her passion, but only marvel by what forgetfulness it was that she could urge the Lady Fleming with such a question."

"I cannot account for it," said Catherine; "but it seems as if great and violent grief and horror sometimes obscure the memory, and spread a cloud like that of an exploding cannon, over the circumstances with which they are accompanied. But I may not stay here, where I came not to moralize with your wisdom, but simply to cool my resentment against that unwise Lady Fleming,

which I think hath now somewhat abated, so that I shall endure her presence without any desire to damage either her church or vasquine. Meanwhile, keep fast that door—I would not for my life that any of these heretics saw her in the unhappy state, which, brought on her as it has been by the success of their own diabolical plottings, they would not stick to call, in their snuffing cant, the judgment of Providence.”

She left the apartment just as the latch of the outward door was raised from without. But the bolt, which Roland had drawn on the inside, resisted the efforts of the person desirous to enter. “Who is there?” said Graeme aloud.

“It is I,” replied the harsh and yet slow voice of the steward Dryfesdale.

“You cannot enter now,” returned the youth.

“And wherefore?” demanded Dryfesdale, “seeing I come but to do my duty, and inquire what mean the shrieks from the apartment of the Moabitish woman. Wherefore, I say, since such is mine errand, can I not enter?”

“Simply,” replied the youth, “because the bolt is drawn, and I have no fancy to undo it. I have the right side of the door to-day, as you had last night.”

“Thou art ill-advised, thou malapert boy,” replied the steward, “to speak to me in such fashion; but I shall inform my Lady of thine insolence.”

“The insolence,” said the page, “is meant for thee only, in fair guerdon of thy discourtesy to me. For thy Lady’s information, I have answer more courteous—you may say that the Queen is ill at ease, and desires to be disturbed neither by visits nor messages.”

“I conjure you, in the name of God,” said the old man, with more solemnity in his tone than he had

hitherto used, "to let me know if her malady really gains power on her!"

"She will have no aid at your hand, or at your Lady's—wherefore, begone, and trouble us no more—we neither want, nor will accept of, aid at your hands."

With this positive reply, the steward, grumbling and dissatisfied, returned down stairs.

XVI

The Lady of Lochleven sat alone in her chamber, endeavouring with sincere but imperfect zeal, to fix her eyes and her attention on the black-lettered Bible which lay before her, bound in velvet and embroidery, and adorned with massive silver clasps and knosps. But she found her utmost efforts unable to withdraw her mind from the resentful recollection of what had last night passed betwixt her and the Queen, in which the latter had with such bitter taunt reminded her of her early and long-repented transgression.

"Why," she said, "should I resent so deeply that another reproaches me with that which I have never ceased to make matter of blushing to myself? and yet, why should this woman, who reaps—at least, has reaped—the fruits of my folly, and has jostled my son aside from the throne, why should she, in the face of all my domestics, and of her own, dare to upbraid me with my shame? Is she not in my power? Does she not fear me? Ha! wily tempter, I will wrestle with thee strongly, and with better suggestions than my own evil heart can supply!"

She again took up the sacred volume, and was endeavouring to fix her attention on its contents, when she was disturbed by a tap at the door of the room. It

opened at her command, and the steward Dryfesdale entered, and stood before her with a gloomy and perturbed expression on his brow.

"What has chanced, Dryfesdale, that thou lookest thus?" said his mistress—"Have there been evil tidings of my son, or of my grandchildren?"

"No, Lady," replied Dryfesdale, "but you were deeply insulted last night, and I fear me thou art as deeply avenged this morning—Where is the chaplain?"

"What mean you by hints so dark, and a question so sudden? The chaplain, as you well know, is absent at Perth upon an assembly of the brethren."

"I care not," answered the steward; "he is but a priest of Baal."

"Dryfesdale," said the Lady, sternly, "what meanest thou? I have ever heard, that in the Low Countries thou didst herd with the Anabaptist preachers, those boars which tear up the vintage—But the ministry which suits me and my house must content my retainers."

"I would I had good ghostly counsel, though," replied the steward, not attending to his mistress's rebuke, and seeming to speak to himself. "This woman of Moab——"

"Speak of her with reverence," said the Lady; "she is a king's daughter."

"Be it so," replied Dryfesdale; "she goes where there is little difference betwixt her and a beggar's child—Mary of Scotland is dying."

"Dying, and in my castle!" said the Lady, starting up in alarm; "of what disease, or by what accident?"

"Bear patience, Lady. The ministry was mine."

"Thine, villain and traitor!—how didst thou dare
——"

"I heard you insulted, Lady—I heard you demand vengeance—I promised you should have it, and I now bring tidings of it."

"Dryfesdale, I trust thou ravest?" said the Lady.

"I rave not," replied the steward. "That which was written of me a million of years ere I saw the light, must be executed by me. She hath that in her veins that, I fear me, will soon stop the springs of life."

"Cruel villain," exclaimed the Lady, "thou hast not poisoned her?"

"And if I had," said Dryfesdale, "what does it so greatly merit? Men bane vermin—why not rid them of their enemies so? in Italy they will do it for a cruizedor."

"Cowardly ruffian, begone from my sight!"

"Think better of my zeal, Lady," said the steward, "and judge not without looking around you. Lindesay, Ruthven, and your kinsman Morton, poniarded Rizzio, and yet you now see no blood on their embroidery—the Lord Semple stabbed the Lord of Sanquhar—does his bonnet sit a jot more awry on his brow? What noble lives in Scotland who has not had a share, for policy or revenge, in some such dealing?—and who imputes it to them? Be not cheated with names—a dagger or a draught work to the same end, and are little unlike—a glass phial imprisons the one, and a leathern sheath the other—one deals with the brain, the other sluices the blood—Yet, I say not I gave aught to this lady."

"What dost thou mean by thus dallying with me?" said the Lady; "as thou wouldst save thy neck from the rope it merits, tell me the whole truth of this story—thou hast long been known a dangerous man."

"Ay, in my master's service I can be cold and sharp as my sword. Be it known to you, that when last on

shore, I consulted with a woman of skill and power, called Nicneven, of whom the country has rung for some brief time past. Fools asked her for charms to make them beloved, misers for means to increase their store; some demanded to know the future—an idle wish, since it cannot be altered, others would have an explanation of the past—idler still, since it cannot be recalled. I heard their queries with scorn, and demanded the means of avenging myself of a deadly enemy, for I grow old, and may trust no longer to Bilboa blade. She gave me a packet—‘Mix that,’ said she, ‘with any liquid, and thy vengeance is complete.’”

“Villain! and you mixed it with the food of this imprisoned lady, to the dishonour of thy master’s house?”

“To redeem the insulted honour of my master’s house, I mixed the contents of the packet with the jar of succory-water: They seldom fail to drain it, and the woman loves it over all.”

“It was a work of hell,” said the Lady Lochleven, “both the asking and the granting.—Away, wretched man, let us see if aid be yet too late!”

“They will not admit us, madam, save we enter by force—I have been twice at the door, but can obtain no entrance.”

“We will beat it level with the ground, if needful—And, hold—summon Randal hither instantly.—Randal, here is a foul and evil chance befallen—send off a boat instantly to Kinross, the Chamberlain Luke Lundin is said to have skill—Fetch off, too, that foul witch Nicneven; she shall first counteract her own spell, and then be burned to ashes in the island of Saint Serf. Away, away—Tell them to hoist sail and ply oar, as ever they would have good of the Douglas’s hand!”

"Mother Nicneven will not be lightly found, or fetched hither on these conditions," answered Dryfesdale.

"Then grant her full assurance of safety—Look to it, for thine own life must answer for this lady's recovery."

"I might have guessed that," said Dryfesdale, sullenly; "but it is my comfort I have avenged mine own cause, as well as yours. She hath scoffed and scripped at me, and encouraged her saucy minion of a page to ridicule my stiff gait and slow speech. I felt it borne in upon me that I was to be avenged on them."

"Go to the western turret," said the Lady, "and remain there in ward until we see how this gear will terminate. I know thy resolved disposition—thou wilt not attempt escape."

"Not were the walls of the turret of egg-shells, and the lake sheeted with ice," said Dryfesdale. "I am well taught, and strong in belief, that man does nought of himself; he is but the foam on the billow, which rises, bubbles, and bursts, not by its own effort, but by the mightier impulse of fate which urges him. Yet, Lady, if I may advise, amid this zeal for the life of the Jezebel of Scotland, forget not what is due to thine own honour, and keep the matter secret as you may."

So saying, the gloomy fatalist turned from her, and stalked off with sullen composure to the place of confinement allotted to him.

XVII.

His lady caught at his last hint, and only expressed her fear that the prisoner had partaken of some unwholesome food, and was dangerously ill. The castle was soon alarmed and in confusion. Randal was despatched to the shore to fetch off Lundin, with such remedies as

could counteract poison; and with further instructions to bring Mother Nicneven, if she could be found, with full power to pledge the Lady of Lochleven's word for her safety.

Meanwhile the Lady of Lochleven herself held parley at the door of the Queen's apartment, and in vain urged the page to undo it.

"Foolish boy!" she said, "thine own life and thy Lady's are at stake. Open, I say, or we will cause the door to be broken down."

"I may not open the door without my royal mistress's orders," answered Roland; "she has been very ill, and now she slumbers—if you wake her by using violence, let the consequence be on you and your followers."

"Was ever woman in a strait so fearful!" exclaimed the Lady of Lochleven. "At least, thou rash boy, beware that no one tastes the food, but especially the jar of succory-water."

She then hastened to the turret, where Dryfesdale had composedly resigned himself to imprisonment. She found him reading, and demanded of him, "Was thy fell potion of speedy operation?"

"Slow," answered the steward. "The hag asked me which I chose—I told her I loved a slow and sure revenge. 'Revenge,' said I, 'is the highest-flavoured draught which man tastes upon earth, and he should sip it by little and little—not drain it up greedily at once.'"

"Against whom, unhappy man, couldst thou nourish so fell a revenge?"

"I had many objects, but the chief was that insolent page."

"The boy!—thou inhuman man," exclaimed the Lady; "what could he do to deserve thy malice?"

"He rose in your favour, and you graced him with your commissions—that was one thing. He rose in that of George Douglas's also—that was another. He was the favourite of the Calvinistic Henderson, who hated me because my spirit disowns a separated priesthood. The Moabitish Queen held him dear—winds from each opposing point blew in his favour—the old servitor of your house was held lightly among ye—above all, from the first time I saw his face, I longed to destroy him."

"What fiend have I nurtured in my house!" replied the Lady. "May God forgive me the sin of having given thee food and raiment!"

"You might not choose, Lady," answered the steward. "Long ere this castle was builded—ay, long ere the islet which sustains it reared its head above the blue water, I was destined to be your faithful slave, and you to be my ungrateful mistress. Remember you not when I plunged amid the victorious French, in the time of this lady's mother, and brought off your husband, when those who had hung at the same breasts with him dared not attempt the rescue?—Remember how I plunged into the lake when your grandson's skiff was overtaken by the tempest, boarded, and steered her safe to the land. Lady—the servant of a Scottish baron is he who regards not his own life, or that of any other, save his master. And, for the death of the woman, I had tried the potion on her sooner, had not Master George been her taster. Her death—would it not be the happiest news that Scotland ever heard? Is she not of the bloody Guisian stock, whose sword was so often red with the blood of God's saints? Is she not the daughter of the wretched tyrant James, whom Heaven cast down from his kingdom, and his pride, even as the king of Babylon was smitten?"

"Peace, villain!" said the Lady—a thousand varied

recollections thronging on her mind at the mention of her royal lover's name; "Peace, and disturb not the ashes of the dead—of the royal, of the unhappy dead. Read thy Bible; and may God grant thee to avail thyself better of its contents than thou hast yet done!" She departed hastily, and as she reached the next apartment, the tears rose in her eyes so hastily, that she was compelled to stop and use her kerchief to dry them. "I expected not this," she said, "no more than to have drawn water from the dry flint, or sap from a withered tree. I saw with a dry eye the apostasy and shame of George Douglas, the hope of my son's house—the child of my love; and yet I now weep for him who has so long lain in his grave—for him to whom I owe it, that his daughter can make a scoffing and a jest of my name! But she is *his* daughter—my heart, hardened against her for so many causes, relents, when a glance of her eye places her father unexpectedly before me—and as often her likeness to that true daughter of the house of Guise, her detested mother, has again confirmed my resolution. But she must not—must not die in my house, and by so foul a practice. Thank God, the operation of the potion is slow, and may be counteracted! I will to her apartment once more. But oh! that hardened villain, whose fidelity we held in such esteem, and had such high proof of! What miracle can unite so much wickedness and so much truth in one bosom!"

XVIII.

The Lady of Lochleven was not aware how far minds of a certain gloomy and determined cast by nature, may be warped by a keen sense of petty injuries and insults, combining with the love of gain, and sense of self-interest, and amalgamated with the crude, wild, and indigested

fanatical opinions which this man had gathered among the crazy sectaries of Germany; or how far the doctrines of fatalism, which he had embraced so decidedly, sear the human conscience, by representing our actions as the result of inevitable necessity.

During her visit to the prisoner, Roland had communicated to Catherine the tenor of the conversation he had had with her at the door of the apartment. The quick intelligence of that lively maiden instantly comprehended the outline of what was believed to have happened, but her prejudices hurried her beyond the truth.

"They meant to have poisoned us," she exclaimed in horror, "and there stands the fatal liquor which should have done the deed!—Ay, as soon as Douglas ceased to be our taster, our food was likely to be fatally seasoned. Thou, Roland, who shouldst have made the essay, wert readily doomed to die with us. Oh, dearest Lady Fleming, pardon, pardon, for the injuries I said to you in my anger—your words were prompted by Heaven to save our lives, and especially that of the injured Queen. But what have we now to do? that old crocodile of the lake will be presently back to shed her hypocritical tears over our dying agonies.—Lady Fleming, what shall we do?"

"Our Lady help us in our need!" she replied; "how should I tell?—unless we were to make our plaint to the Regent."

"Make our plaint to the devil," said Catherine impatiently, "and accuse his dam at the foot of his burning throne!—The Queen still sleeps—we must gain time. The poisoning hag must not know her scheme has miscarried; the old envenomed spider has but too many ways of mending her broken web.—The jar of succory-water," said she—"Roland, if thou be'st a man, help me

—empty the jar on the chimney or from the window—make such waste among the viands as if we had made our usual meal, and leave the fragments on cup and porringer, but taste nothing as thou lovest thy life. I will sit by the Queen, and tell her at her waking, in what a fearful pass we stand. Her sharp wit and ready spirit will teach us what is best to be done. Meanwhile, till farther notice, observe, Roland, that the Queen is in a state of torpor—that Lady Fleming is indisposed—that character” (speaking in a lower tone) “will suit her best, and save her wits some labour in vain. I am not so much indisposed, thou understandest.”

“And I?” said the page——

“You?” replied Catherine, “you are quite well—who thinks it worth while to poison puppy-dogs or pages?”

“Does this levity become the time?” asked the page.

“It does, it does,” answered Catherine Seyton; “if the Queen approves, I see plainly how this disconcerted attempt may do us good service.”

She went to work while she spoke, eagerly assisted by Roland. The breakfast table soon displayed the appearance as if the meal had been eaten as usual; and the ladies retired as softly as possible into the Queen’s sleeping apartment. At a new summons of the Lady Lochleven, the page undid the door, and admitted her into the anteroom, asking her pardon for having withstood her, alleging in excuse, that the Queen had fallen into a heavy slumber since she had broken her fast.

“She has eaten and drunken, then?” said the Lady of Lochleven.

“Surely,” replied the page, “according to her Grace’s ordinary custom, unless upon the fasts of the church.”

“The jar,” she said, hastily examining it, “it is empty—drank the Lady Mary the whole of this water?”

"A large part, madam; and I heard the Lady Catherine Seyton jestingly upbraid the Lady Mary Fleming with having taken more than a just share of what remained, so that but little fell to her own lot."

"And are they well in health?" said the Lady of Lochleven.

"Lady Fleming," said the page, "complains of lethargy, and looks duller than usual; and the Lady Catherine of Seyton feels her head somewhat more giddy than is her wont."

He raised his voice a little as he said these words, to apprise the ladies of the part assigned to each of them, and not, perhaps, without the wish of conveying to the ears of Catherine the page-like jest which lurked in the allotment.

"I will enter the Queen's bed-chamber," said the Lady Lochleven; "my business is express."

As she advanced to the door the voice of Catherine Seyton was heard from within—"No one can enter here—the Queen sleeps."

"I will not be controlled, young lady," replied the Lady of Lochleven; "there is, I wot, no inner bar, and I will enter in your despite."

"There is, indeed, no inner bar," answered Catherine firmly; "but there are the staples where that bar should be, and into those staples have I thrust mine arm like an ancestress of your own, when, better employed than the Douglasses of our days, she thus defended the bed-chamber of her sovereign against murderers. Try your force, then, and see whether a Seyton cannot rival in courage a maiden of the house of Douglas."

"I dare not attempt the pass at such risk," said the Lady of Lochleven. "Strange that this Princess, with all that justly attaches to her as blame-worthy, should

preserve such empire over the minds of her attendants. Damsel, I give thee my honour that I come for the Queen's safety and advantage. Awaken her if thou lovest her, and pray her leave that I may enter. I will retire from the door the whilst."

"Thou wilt not awaken the Queen?" said the Lady Fleming.

"What choice have we?" said the ready-witted maiden, "unless you deem it better to wait till the Lady Lochleven herself plays lady of the bed-chamber. Her fit of patience will not last long, and the queen must be prepared to meet her."

"But thou wilt bring back her Grace's fit by thus disturbing her."

"Heaven forbid!" replied Catherine; "but if so it must pass for an effect of the poison. I hope better things, and that the Queen will be able when she wakes to form her own judgment in this terrible crisis. Meanwhile, do thou, dear Lady Fleming, practise to look as dull and heavy as the alertness of thy spirit will permit."

XIX.

Catherine kneeled by the side of the Queen's bed, and, kissing her hand repeatedly, succeeded at last in awakening without alarming her. She seemed surprised to find that she was ready dressed, but sat up in her bed, and appeared so perfectly composed, that Catherine Seyton, without farther preamble, judged it safe to inform her of the predicament in which they were placed. Mary turned pale, and crossed herself again and again when she heard the imminent danger in which she had stood.

"We cannot do better," she said after her hasty conference with Catherine, pressing her at the same time to

her bosom and kissing her forehead; "we cannot do better than to follow the scheme so happily devised by thy quick wit and bold affection. Undo the door to the Lady Lochleven, she shall meet her match in art, though not in perfidy. Fleming, draw close the curtain, and get thee behind it—thou art a better tire-woman than an actress; do but breathe heavily, and, if thou wilt, groan slightly, and it will top thy part. Hark! they come. Now, Catherine of Medicis, may thy spirit inspire me, for a cold northern brain is too blunt for this scene!"

Ushered by Catherine Seyton, and stepping as light as she could, the Lady Lochleven was shown into the twilight apartment, and conducted to the side of the couch where Mary, pallid and exhausted from a sleepless night, and the subsequent agitation of the morning, lay extended so listlessly as might well confirm the worst fears of her hostess.

"Now, God forgive us our sins!" said the Lady of Lochleven, forgetting her pride and throwing herself on her knees by the side of the bed; "it is too true—she is murdered!"

"Who is in the chamber?" said Mary, as if awaking from a heavy sleep. "Seyton, Fleming, where are you? I heard a strange voice. Who waits? Call Courcelles."

"Alas! her memory is at Holyrood, though her body is at Lochleven. Forgive, madam," continued the Lady, "if I call your attention to me—I am Margaret Erskine, of the house of Mar, by marriage Lady Douglas of Lochleven."

"Oh, our gentle hostess," answered the Queen, "who hath such care of our lodgings and of our diet. We cumber you too much and too long, good Lady of Lochleven; but we now trust your task of hospitality is well-nigh ended."

"Her words go like a knife through my heart," said the Lady of Lochleven. "With a breaking heart I pray your Grace to tell me what is your ailment, that aid may be had if there be yet time."

"Nay, my ailment," replied the Queen, "is nothing worth telling, or worth a leech's notice—my limbs feel heavy—my heart feels cold—a prisoner's limbs and heart are rarely otherwise—fresh air, methinks, and freedom would soon revive me; but as the Estates have ordered it, death alone can break my prison-doors."

"Were it possible, madam," said the Lady, "that your liberty could restore your perfect health, I would myself encounter the resentment of the Regent—of my son, Sir William—of my whole friends, rather than you should meet your fate in this castle."

"Alas! madam," said the Lady Fleming, who conceived the time propitious to show that her own address had been held too lightly of; "it is but trying what good freedom may work upon us; for myself, I think a free walk on the greensward would do me much good at heart."

The Lady of Lochleven rose from the bedside, and darted a penetrating look at the elder valetudinary. "Are you so evil-disposed, Lady Fleming?"

"Evil-disposed indeed, madam," replied the court dame, "and more especially since breakfast."

"Help! help!" exclaimed Catherine, anxious to break off a conversation which boded her schemes no good; "help! I say, help! the Queen is about to pass away. Aid her, Lady Lochleven, if you be a woman!"

The Lady hastened to support the Queen's head, who, turning her eyes towards her with an air of great languor, exclaimed, "Thanks, my dearest Lady of Lochleven—notwithstanding some passages of late, I have never mis-

construed or misdoubted your affection to our house. It was proved, as I have heard, before I was born."

The Lady Lochleven sprung from the floor, on which she had again knelt, and, having paced the apartment in great disorder, flung open the lattice as if to get air.

"Now, Our Lady, forgive me!" said Catherine to herself. "How deep must the love of sarcasm be implanted in the breasts of us women, since the queen, with all her sense, will risk ruin rather than rein in her wit!" She then adventured, stooping over the Queen's person, to press her arm with her hand, saying, at the same time, "For God's sake, madam, restrain yourself."

"Thou art too forward, maiden," said the Queen; but immediately added in a low whisper, "forgive me, Catherine; but when I felt the hag's murderous hands busy about my head and neck, I felt such disgust and hatred that I must have said something or died. But I will be schooled to better behaviour—only see that thou let her not touch me."

"Now, God be praised!" said the Lady Lochleven, withdrawing her head from the window, "the boat comes as fast as sail and oar can send wood through water—it brings the leech and a female—certainly, from the appearance the very person I was in quest of. Were she but well out of this castle, with our honour safe, I would that she were on the top of the wildest mountain in Norway; or I would I had been there myself, ere I had undertaken this trust."

XX.

While she thus expressed herself, standing apart at one window, Roland Græme from the other watched the boat bursting through the waters of the lake, which glided from its side in ripple and in foam. He, too, became

sensible, that at the stern was seated the medical chamberlain clad in his black velvet cloak; and that his own relative, Magdalen Græme, in her assumed character of Mother Nicneven, stood in the bow, her hands clasped together, and pointed towards the castle, and her attitude, even at that distance, expressing enthusiastic eagerness to arrive at the landing-place. They arrived there accordingly, and while the supposed witch was detained in a room beneath, the physician was ushered to the Queen's apartment, which he entered with all due professional solemnity. Catherine had, in the meanwhile, fallen back from the Queen's bed, and taken an opportunity to whisper to Roland, "Methinks, from the information of the threadbare velvet cloak and the solemn beard, there would be little trouble in haltering yonder ass. But thy grandmother, Roland, thy grandmother's zeal will ruin us if she get not a hint to dissemble."

Roland, without reply, glided towards the door of the apartment, crossed the parlour, and safely entered the ante-chamber; but when he attempted to pass farther, the word, "Back! back!" echoed from one to the other by two men armed with carabines, convinced him that the Lady of Lochleven's suspicions had not, even in the midst of her alarms, been so far lulled to sleep as to omit the precaution of stationing sentinels on her prisoners. He was compelled, therefore, to return to the parlour, or audience-chamber, in which he found the Lady of the castle in conference with her learned leech.

"A truce with your cant phrase and your solemn foppery, Lundin," in such terms she accosted the man of art, "and let me know instantly, if thou canst tell, whether this lady hath swallowed aught that is less than wholesome?"

"Nay, but, good Lady—honoured patroness—to whom

I am alike bondsman in my medical and official capacity, deal reasonably with me. If this, mine illustrious patient, will not answer a question, saving with sighs and moans—if that other honourable lady will do nought but yawn in my face when I inquire after the diagnostics—and if that other young damsel, who I profess is a comely maiden—

“Talk not to me of comeliness or of damsels,” said the Lady of Lochleven, “I say, are they evil-disposed? In one word, man, have they taken poison, ay or no?”

“Poisons, madam,” said the learned leech, “are of various sorts. There is your animal poison, as the *lepus marinus*, there are mineral and semi-mineral poisons, there are your poisons from herbs and vegetables, as opium, aconitum, cantharides, and the like—there are also—”

“Now, out upon thee for a learned fool! and I myself am no better for expecting an oracle from such a log,” said the Lady.

“Nay, but if your Ladyship will have patience—if I knew what food they have partaken of, or could see but the remnants of what they have last eaten—for as to the external and internal symptoms, I can discover nought like; for, as Galen saith—”

“Away, fool!” said the Lady; “send me that hag hither; she shall avouch what it was that she hath given to the wretch Dryfesdale, or the pilniewinks and thumbikins shall wrench it out of her finger joints!”

“Art hath no enemy unless the ignorant,” said the mortified doctor; veiling, however, his remark under the Latin version, and stepping apart into a corner to watch the result.

In a minute or two Magdalen Græme entered the apartment. She was attended by two guards, of whose

presence she did not seem even to be conscious, and who followed her with an air of embarrassment and timidity, which was probably owing to their belief in her supernatural power, coupled with the effect produced by her bold and undaunted demeanour. She confronted the Lady of Lochleven, who seemed to endure with high disdain the confidence of her air and manner.

"Wretched woman!" said the Lady, after essaying for a moment to bear her down, before she addressed her, by the stately severity of her look, "what was that powder which thou didst give to a servant of this house, by name Jasper Dryfesdale, that he might work out with it some slow and secret vengeance? Confess its nature and properties, or, by the honour of Douglas, I give thee to fire and stake before the sun is lower!"

"Alas!" said Magdalen Græme in reply, "and when became a Douglas or a Douglas's man so unfurnished of his means of revenge that he should seek them at the hands of a poor and solitary woman? The towers in which your captives pine away into unpitied graves, yet stand fast on their foundation—the crimes wrought in them have not yet burst their vaults asunder—your men have still their crossbows, pistolets, and daggers—why need you seek to herbs or charms for the execution of your revenges?"

"Hear me, foul hag," said the Lady Lochleven,—“but what avails speaking to thee? Bring Dryfesdale hither, and let them be confronted together.”

"You may spare your retainers the labour," replied Magdalen Græme. "I came not here to be confronted with a base groom—I came to speak with the Queen of Scotland—Give place there!"

And while the Lady Lochleven stood confounded at her boldness, Magdalen Græme strode past her into the

bedchamber of the Queen, and, kneeling on the floor, made a salutation as if, in the Oriental fashion, she meant to touch the earth with her forehead.

"Hail, Princess!" she said, "hail, daughter of many a King, but graced above them all in that thou art called to suffer for the true faith—hail to thee, the pure gold of whose crown has been tried in the seven-times heated furnace of affliction—hear the comfort which God and our Lady send thee by the mouth of thy unworthy servant. But first"—and stooping her head she crossed herself repeatedly, and, still upon her knees, appeared to be rapidly reciting some formula of devotion.

"Seize her, and drag her to the massy-moore!—to the deepest dungeon with the sorceress," spoke the Lady of Lochleven, but the physician presumed to interpose.

"I pray of you, honoured madam, she be permitted to take her course without interruption. Peradventure we shall learn something concerning the nostrum she hath ventured, contrary to law and the rules of art, to adhibit to these ladies, through the medium of the steward Dryfesdale."

"For a fool," replied the Lady of Lochleven, "thou hast counselled wisely—I will bridle my resentment till their conference be over."

"God forbid, honoured lady," said Dr. Lundin, "that you should suppress it longer—nothing may more endanger the frame of your honoured body; and truly, if there be witchcraft in this matter, it is held by the vulgar, and even by solid authors on Demonology, that three scruples of the ashes of the witch, when she hath been well and carefully burned at a stake, is a grand Catholicon in such matter, even as they prescribe a hair of the dog that bit the patient, in cases of hydrophobia. I warrant neither treatment, being out of the regular practice of

the schools; but, in the present case, there can be little harm in trying the conclusion upon this old necromancer and quacksalver."

"Peace, fool!" said the Lady, "she is about to speak."

XXI.

At that moment Magdalen Græme arose from her knees, and turned her countenance off the Queen, at the same time advancing her foot, extending her arm, and assuming the mien and attitude of a Sibyl in frenzy. As her gray hair floated back from beneath her coif, and her eye gleamed fire from under its shaggy eyebrow, the effect of her expressive, though emaciated features, was heightened by an enthusiasm approaching to insanity, and her appearance struck with awe all who were present. Her eyes for a time glanced wildly around as if seeking for something to aid her in collecting her powers of expression, and her lips had a nervous and quivering motion, as those of one who would fain speak, yet rejects as inadequate the words which present themselves. Mary herself caught the infection as if by a sort of magnetic influence, and raising herself from her bed, without being able to withdraw her eyes from those of Magdalen, waited as if for the oracle of a Pythoness. She waited not long, for no sooner had the enthusiast collected herself, than her gaze became intensely steady, her features assumed a determined energy, and when she began to speak, the words flowed from her with a profuse fluency, which might have passed for inspiration, and which, perhaps, she herself mistook for such.

"Arise," she said, "Queen of France and of England! Arise, Lioness of Scotland, and be not dismayed though the nets of the hunters have encircled thee! Stoop not

to feign with the false ones, whom thou shalt soon meet in the field. The issue of battle is with the God of armies, but by battle thy cause shall be tried. Lay aside, then, the arts of lower mortals, and assume those which become a Queen! True defender of the only true faith, the armoury of Heaven is open to thee! Faithful daughter of the Church, take the keys of St. Peter, to bind and to loose! Royal Princess of the land, take the sword of St. Paul, to smite and to shear! There is darkness in thy destiny;—but not in these towers, not under the rule of their haughty mistress, shall that destiny be closed—In other lands the lioness may crouch to the power of the tigress, but not in her own—not in Scotland shall the Queen of Scotland long remain captive—nor is the fate of the royal Stewart in the hands of the traitor Douglas. Let the Lady of Lochleven double her bolts and deepen her dungeons, they shall not retain thee—each element shall give thee its assistance ere thou shalt continue captive—the land shall lend its earthquakes, the water its waves, the air its tempests, the fire its devouring flames, to desolate this house, rather than it shall continue the place of thy captivity. Hear this, and tremble, all ye who fight against the light, for she says it, to whom it hath been assured!”

She was silent, and the astonished physician said, “If there was ever a possessed demoniac, in our days, there is a devil speaking with that woman’s tongue!”

“Practice,” said the Lady of Lochleven, recovering her surprise; “here is all practice and imposture. To the dungeon with her!”

“Lady of Lochleven,” said Mary, arising from her bed and coming forward with her wonted dignity, “ere you make arrest on any one in our presence, hear me but one word. I have done you some wrong—I believed you

privity to the murderous purpose of your vassal, and I deceived you in suffering you to believe it had taken effect. I did you wrong, Lady of Lochleven, for I perceive your purpose to aid me was sincere. We tasted not of the liquid, nor are we now sick, save that we languish for our freedom."

"It is avowed like Mary of Scotland," said Magdalen Græme; "and know, besides, that had the Queen drained the draught to the dregs, it was harmless as the water from a sainted spring. Trow ye, proud woman," she added, addressing herself to the Lady of Lochleven, "that I—I—would have been the wretch to put poison in the hands of a servant or vassal of the house of Lochleven, knowing whom that house contained? as soon would I have furnished drug to slay my own daughter!"

"Am I thus bearded in mine own castle?" said the Lady; "to the dungeon with her!—she shall abye what is due to the vendor of poisons and practiser of witchcraft."

"Yet hear me for an instant, Lady of Lochleven," said Mary; "and do you," to Magdalen, "be silent at my command. Your steward, Lady, has by confession attempted my life, and those of my household, and this woman hath done her best to save them, by furnishing him with what was harmless, in place of the fatal drugs which he expected. Methinks I propose to you but a fair exchange when I say I forgive your vassal with all my heart, and leave vengeance to God, and to his conscience, so that you also forgive the boldness of this woman in your presence; for we trust you do not hold it as a crime, that she substituted an innocent beverage for the mortal poison which was to have drenched our cup."

"Heaven forfend, madam," said the Lady, "that I should account that a crime which saved the house of Douglas from a foul breach of honour and hospitality!

We have written to our son touching our vassal's delict, and he must abide his doom, which will most likely be death. Touching this woman, her trade is damnable by Scripture, and is mortally punished by the wise laws of our ancestry—she also must abide her doom."

"And have I then," said the Queen, "no claim on the house of Lochleven for the wrong I have so nearly suffered within their walls? I ask but in requital the life of a frail and aged woman, whose brain, as yourself may judge, seems somewhat affected by years and suffering."

"If the Lady Mary," replied the inflexible Lady of Lochleven, "hath been menaced with wrong in the house of Douglas, it may be regarded as some compensation, that her complots have cost that house the exile of a valued son."

"Plead no more for me, my gracious Sovereign," said Magdalen Græme, "nor abase yourself to ask so much as a gray hair of my head at her hands. I knew the risk at which I served my Church and my Queen, and was ever prompt to pay my poor life as the ransom. It is a comfort to think, that in slaying me, or in restraining my freedom, or even in injuring that single gray hair, the house, whose honour she boasts so highly, will have filled up the measure of their shame by the breach of their solemn written assurance of safety." And taking from her bosom a paper, she handed it to the Queen.

"It is a solemn assurance of safety in life and limb," said Queen Mary, "with space to come and go, under the hand and seal of the Chamberlain of Kinross, granted to Magdalen Græme, commonly called Mother Nicneven, in consideration of her consenting to put herself, for the space of twenty-four hours, if required, within the iron gate of the Castle of Lochleven."

"Knave!" said the Lady, turning to the Chamberlain, "how dared you grant her such a protection?"

"It was by your Ladyship's orders, transmitted by Randal, as he can bear witness," replied Doctor Lundin; "nay, I am only like the pharmacopolist, who compounds the drugs after the order of the mediciner."

"I remember—I remember," answered the Lady; "but I meant the assurance only to be used in case, by residing in another jurisdiction, she could not have been apprehended under our warrant."

"Nevertheless," said the Queen, "the Lady of Lochleven is bound by the action of her deputy in granting the assurance."

"Madam," replied the Lady, "the house of Douglas have never broken their safe-conduct, and never will—too deeply did they suffer by such a breach of trust, exercised on themselves, when your Grace's ancestor, the second James, in defiance of the rights of hospitality, and of his own written assurance of safety, poniarded the brave Earl of Douglas with his own hand, and within two yards of the social board, at which he had just before sat the King of Scotland's honoured guest."

"Methinks," said the Queen carelessly, "in consideration of so very recent and enormous a tragedy, which I think only chanced some six-score years ago, the Douglasses should have shown themselves less tenacious of the company of their sovereigns, than you, Lady of Lochleven, seem to be of mine."

"Let Randal," said the Lady, "take the hag back to Kinross, and set her at full liberty, discharging her from our bounds in future, on peril of her head. And let your wisdom," to the Chamberlain, "keep her company. And fear not for your character, though I send you in such company; for, granting her to be a witch, it would be a waste of faggots to burn you for a wizard."

The crest-fallen Chamberlain was preparing to depart;

but Magdalen Græme, collecting herself, was about to reply, when the Queen interposed, saying, "Good mother, we heartily thank you for your unfeigned zeal towards our person, and pray you, as our liege-woman, that you abstain from whatever may lead you into personal danger; and, farther, it is our will that you depart without a word of farther parley with any one in this castle. For thy present guerdon, take this small reliquary—it was given to us by our uncle the Cardinal, and hath had the benediction of the Holy Father himself;—and now depart in peace and in silence. For you, learned sir," continued the Queen, advancing to the Doctor, who made his reverence in a manner doubly embarrassed by the awe of the Queen's presence, which made him fear to do too little, and by the apprehension of his lady's displeasure, in case he should chance to do too much,—“for you, learned sir, as it was not your fault, though surely our own good fortune, that we did not need your skill at this time, it would not become us, however circumstanced, to suffer our leech to leave us without such guerdon as we can offer.”

With these words, and with the grace which never forsook her, though, in the present case, there might lurk under it a little gentle ridicule, she offered a small embroidered purse to the Chamberlain, who, with extended hand and arched back, his learned face stooping until a physiognomist might have practised the metoposcopical science upon it, as seen from behind betwixt his gambadoes, was about to accept of the professional recompense offered by so fair as well as illustrious a hand. But the Lady interposed, and, regarding the Chamberlain, said aloud, “No servant of our house, without instantly relinquishing that character, and incurring withal our highest displeasure, shall dare receive any gratuity at the hand of the Lady Mary.”

Sadly and slowly the Chamberlain raised his depressed stature into the perpendicular attitude, and left the apartment dejectedly, followed by Magdalen Græme, after, with mute but expressive gesture, she had kissed the reliquary with which the Queen had presented her, and, raising her clasped hands and uplifted eyes towards heaven, had seemed to entreat a benediction upon the royal dame. As she left the castle, and went towards the quay where the boat lay, Roland Græme, anxious to communicate with her if possible, threw himself in her way, and might have succeeded in exchanging a few words with her, as she was guarded only by the dejected Chamberlain and his halberdiers, but she seemed to have taken, in its most strict and literal acceptation, the command to be silent which she had received from the Queen; for, to the repeated signs of her grandson, she only replied by laying her finger on her lip. Dr. Lundin was not so reserved. Regret for the handsome gratuity, and for the compulsory task of self-denial imposed on him, had grieved the spirit of that worthy officer and learned mediciner—"Even thus, my friend," said he, squeezing the page's hand as he bade him farewell, "is merit rewarded. I came to cure this unhappy lady—and I profess she well deserves the trouble, for, say what they will of her, she hath a most winning manner, a sweet voice, a gracious smile, and a most majestic wave of her hand. If she was not poisoned, say, my dear Master Roland, was that fault of mine, I being ready to cure her if she had?—and now I am denied the permission to accept my well-earned honorarium."

He wiped his eyes, stepped on the gunwale, and the boat pushed off from the shore, and went merrily across the lake, which was dimpled by the summer wind.

XXII.

[From the agitating scene in the Queen's presence-chamber, the Lady of Lochleven retreated to her own apartment, and sent for Dryfesdale. She informed him that she was about to send off an express messenger to her son in Edinburgh, to take order how he should be disposed of. Dryfesdale offered to go to Sir William Douglas himself. He was ferried over to the village, and being accommodated with a horse by the Chamberlain's authority, he joined Auchtermuchty the common carrier on his way to Edinburgh. On their journey they stopped at a wayside inn kept by Old Keltie, and while there Dryfesdale was slain by Henry Seyton, brother of Catherine.]

The tenor of our tale carries us back to the Castle of Lochleven, where we take up the order of events on the same remarkable day on which Dryfesdale had been dismissed from the castle. It was past noon, the usual hour of dinner, yet no preparations seemed made for the Queen's entertainment. Mary herself had retired into her own apartment, where she was closely engaged in writing. Her attendants were together in the presence-chamber, and much disposed to speculate on the delay of the dinner; for it may be recollected that their breakfast had been interrupted. "I believe in my conscience," said the page, "that having found the poisoning scheme miscarry, by having gone to the wrong merchant for their deadly wares, they are now about to try how famine will work upon us."

Lady Fleming was somewhat alarmed at this surmise, but comforted herself by observing that the chimney of the kitchen had reeked that whole day in a manner which contradicted the supposition.—Catherine Seyton presently exclaimed, "They were bearing the dishes across the court, marshalled by the Lady Lochleven herself, dressed out in her highest and stiffest ruff, with her partlet and sleeves of cyprus, and her huge old-fashioned farthingale of crimson velvet."

"I believe on my word," said the page, approaching the window also, "it was in that very farthingale that she captivated the heart of gentle King Jamie, which procured our poor Queen her precious bargain of a brother."

"That may hardly be, Master Roland," answered the Lady Fleming, who was a great recorder of the changes of fashion, "since the farthingales came first in when the Queen Regent went to Saint Andrews, after the battle of Pinkie, and were then called *Vertugardins*——"

She would have proceeded farther in this important discussion, but was interrupted by the entrance of the Lady of Lochleven, who preceded the servants bearing the dishes, and formally discharged the duty of tasting each of them. Lady Fleming regretted, in courtly phrase, that the Lady of Lochleven should have undertaken so troublesome an office.

"After the strange incident of this day, madam," said the Lady, "it is necessary for my honour and that of my son, that I partake whatever is offered to my involuntary guest. Please to inform the Lady Mary that I attend her commands."

"Her Majesty," replied Lady Fleming, with due emphasis on the word, "shall be informed that the Lady Lochleven waits."

Mary appeared instantly, and addressed her hostess with courtesy, which even approached to something more cordial. "This is nobly done, Lady Lochleven," she said; "for though we ourselves apprehend no danger under your roof, our ladies have been much alarmed by this morning's chance, and our meal will be the more cheerful for your presence and assurance. Please you to sit down."

The Lady Lochleven obeyed the Queen's commands,

and Roland performed the office of carver and attendant as usual. But, notwithstanding what the Queen had said, the meal was silent and unsocial; and every effort which Mary made to excite some conversation, died away under the solemn and chill replies, of the Lady of Lochleven. At length it became plain that the Queen, who had considered these advances as a condescension on her part, and who piqued herself justly on her powers of pleasing, became offended at the repulsive conduct of her hostess. After looking with a significant glance at Lady Fleming and Catherine, she slightly shrugged her shoulders, and remained silent. A pause ensued, at the end of which the Lady Douglas spoke:—"I perceive, madam, I am a check on the mirth of this fair company. I pray you to excuse me—I am a widow—alone here in a most perilous charge—deserted by my grandson—betrayed by my servant—I am little worthy of the grace you do me in offering me a seat at your table, where I am aware that wit and pastime are usually expected from the guests."

"If the Lady Lochleven is serious," said the Queen, "we wonder by what simplicity she expects our present meals to be seasoned with mirth. If she is a widow, she lives honoured and uncontrolled, at the head of her late husband's household. But I know at least of one widowed woman in the world, before whom the world's desertion and betrayal ought never to be mentioned, since no one has been made so bitterly acquainted with their import."

"I meant not, madam, to remind you of your misfortunes, by the mention of mine," answered the Lady Lochleven; and there was again a deep silence.

Mary at length addressed Lady Fleming, "We can commit no deadly sins here, *ma bonne*, where we are so well warded and looked to; but if we could, this Car-

thusian silence might be useful as a kind of penance. If thou hast adjusted my wimple amiss, my Fleming, or if Catherine hath made a wry stitch in her broidery, when she was thinking of something else than her work, or if Roland Græme hath missed a wild duck on the wing, and broke a quarrel-pane of glass in the turret window, as chanced to him a week since, now is the time to think on your sins and to repent of them."

"Madam, I speak with all reverence," said the Lady Lochleven; "but I am old, and claim the privilege of age. Methinks your followers might find fitter subjects for repentance than the trifles you mention, and so mention—once more, I crave your pardon—as if you jested with sin and repentance both."

"You have been our taster, Lady Lochleven," said the Queen, "I perceive you would eke out your duty with that of our Father Confessor—and since you choose that our conversation should be serious, may I ask you why the Regent's promise—since your son so styles himself—has not been kept to me in that respect? From time to time this promise has been renewed, and as constantly broken. Methinks those who pretend themselves to so much gravity and sanctity, should not debar from others the religious succours which their consciences require."

"Madam, the Earl of Murray was indeed weak enough," said the Lady Lochleven, "to give so far way to your unhappy prejudices, and a religioner of the Pope presented himself on his part at our town of Kinross. But the Douglas is Lord of his own castle, and will not permit his threshold to be darkened, no not for a single moment, by an emissary belonging to the Bishop of Rome."

"Methinks it were well, then," said Mary, "that my

Lord Regent would send me where there is less scruple and more charity."

"In this, madam," answered the Lady Lochleven, "you mistake the nature both of charity and of religion. Charity giveth to those who are in delirium the medicaments which may avail their health, but refuses those enticing cates and liquors which please the palate, but augment the disease."

"This your charity, Lady Lochleven, is pure cruelty, under the hypocritical disguise of friendly care. I am oppressed amongst you as if you meant the destruction both of my body and soul; but Heaven will not endure such iniquity for ever, and they who are the most active agents in it may speedily expect their reward."

XXIII.

At this moment Randal entered the apartment, with a look so much perturbed, that the Lady Fleming uttered a faint scream, the Queen was obviously startled, and the Lady of Lochleven, though too bold and proud to evince any marked signs of alarm, asked hastily what was the matter?

"Dryfesdale has been slain, madam," was the reply; "murdered as soon as he gained the dry land by young Master Henry Seyton."

It was now Catherine's turn to start and grow pale—"Has the murderer of the Douglas's vassal escaped?" was the Lady's hasty question.

"There was none to challenge him but old Keltie and the carrier Auchtermuchty," replied Randal; "unlikely men to stay one of the frackest youths in Scotland of his years, and who was sure to have friends and partakers at no great distance."

"Was the deed completed?" said the Lady.

"Done, and done thoroughly, said Randal; "a Seyton seldom strikes twice. But the body was not despoiled, and your honour's packet goes forward to Edinburgh by Auchtermuchty, who leaves Keltie-Bridge early to-morrow—marry, he has drunk two bottles of aquavite to put the fright out of his head, and now sleeps them off beside his cart-havers."

There was a pause when this fatal tale was told. The Queen and Lady Douglas looked on each other, as if each thought how she could best turn the incident to her own advantage in the controversy, which was continually kept alive betwixt them. Catherine Seyton kept her kerchief at her eyes and wept.

"You see, madam, the bloody maxims and practice of the deluded Papists," said Lochleven.

"Nay, madam," replied the Queen, "say rather you see the deserved judgment of Heaven upon a Calvinistical poisoner."

"Dryfesdale was not of the Church of Geneva, or of Scotland," said the Lady of Lochleven, hastily.

"He was a heretic, however," replied Mary; "there is but one true and unerring guide; the others lead alike into error."

"Well, madam, I trust it will reconcile you to your retreat, that this deed shows the temper of those who might wish you at liberty. Bloodthirsty tyrants, and cruel men-quellers are they all, from the Clan-Ranald and Clan-Tosach in the north, to the Ferniherst and Buccleuch in the south—the murdering Seytons in the east, and——"

"Methinks, madam, you forget that I am a Seyton!" said Catherine, withdrawing her kerchief from her face, which was now coloured with indignation.

"If I had forgot it, fair mistress, your forward bearing would have reminded me," said Lady Lochleven.

"If my brother has slain the villain that would have poisoned his Sovereign, and his sister," said Catherine, "I am only so far sorry that he should have spared the hangman his proper task. For aught further, had it been the best Douglas in the land, he would have been honoured in falling by the Seyton's sword."

"Farewell, gay mistress," said the Lady of Lochleven, rising to withdraw; "it is such maidens as you who make giddy-fashioned revellers and deadly brawlers. Boys must needs rise, forsooth, in the grace of some sprightly damsel, who thinks to dance through life as through a French galliard." She then made her reverence to the Queen, and added, "Do you also, madam, fare you well, till curfew time, when I will make, perchance, more bold than welcome in attending upon your supper board. Come with me, Randal, and tell me more of this cruel fact."

"'Tis an extraordinary chance," said the Queen, when she had departed; "and, villain as he was, I would this man had been spared time for repentance. We will cause something to be done for his soul, if we ever attain our liberty, and the Church will permit such grace to a heretic. But, tell me, Catherine, *ma mignône*—this brother of thine, who is so *frack*, as the fellow called him, bears he the same wonderful likeness to thee as formerly?"

"If your Grace means in temper, you know whether I am so *frack* as the serving-man spoke him."

"Nay, thou art prompt enough in all reasonable conscience," replied the Queen; "but thou art my own darling notwithstanding. But I meant, is this thy twin-brother as like thee in form and features as formerly? I

remember thy dear mother alleged it as a reason for destining thee to the veil, that, were ye both to go at large, thou wouldst surely get the credit of some of thy brother's mad pranks."

"I believe, madam," said Catherine, "there are some unusually simple people even yet, who can hardly distinguish betwixt us, especially when, for diversion's sake, my brother hath taken a female dress," and as she spoke, she gave a quick glance at Roland Græme, to whom this conversation conveyed a ray of light, welcome as ever streamed into the dungeon of a captive through the door which opened to give him freedom.

"He must be a handsome cavalier this brother of thine, if he be so like you," replied Mary. "He was in France, I think, for these late years, so that I saw him not at Holyrood."

"His looks, madam, have never been much found fault with," answered Catherine Seyton; "but I would he had less of that angry and heady spirit which evil times have encouraged amongst our young nobles. God knows, I grudge not his life in your Grace's quarrel; and love him for the willingness with which he labours for your rescue. But wherefore should he brawl with an old ruffianly serving-man, and stain at once his name with such a broil, and his hands with the blood of an old and ignoble wretch?"

"Nay, be patient, Catherine; I will not have thee traduce my gallant young knight. With Henry for my knight, and Roland Græme for my trusty squire, methinks I am like a princess of romance, who may shortly set at defiance the dungeons and the weapons of all wicked sorcerers. But my head aches with the agitation of the day. Take me *La Mer des Histoires*, and resume where we left off on Wednesday. Our Lady help thy head,

girl, or rather may she help thy heart! I asked thee for the Sea of Histories, and thou hast brought *La Cronique d'Amour*."

Once embarked upon the Sea of Histories, the Queen continued her labours with her needle, while Lady Fleming and Catherine read to her alternately for two hours.

XXIV.

As to Roland Græme, it is probable that he continued in secret intent upon the Chronicle of Love, notwithstanding the censure which the Queen seemed to pass upon that branch of study. He now remembered a thousand circumstances of voice and manner, which, had his own prepossession been less, must surely have discriminated the brother from the sister; and he felt ashamed, that, having as it were by heart every particular of Catherine's gestures, words, and manners, he should have thought her, notwithstanding her spirits and levity, capable of assuming the bold step, loud tones, and forward assurance, which accorded well enough with her brother's hasty and masculine character. He endeavoured repeatedly to catch a glance of Catherine's eye, that he might judge how she was disposed to look upon him since he had made the discovery, but he was unsuccessful; for Catherine, when she was not reading herself, seemed to take so much interest in the exploits of the Teutonic knights against the Heathens of Esthonia and Livonia, that he could not surprise her eye even for a second. But when, closing the book, the Queen commanded their attendance in the garden, Mary, perhaps of set purpose, (for Roland's anxiety could not escape so practised an observer,) afforded him a favourable opportunity of accosting his mistress. The Queen commanded them to

a little distance, while she engaged Lady Fleming in a particular and private conversation; the subject whereof we learn, from another authority, to have been the comparative excellence of the high standing ruff and the falling band. Roland must have been duller and more sheepish than ever was youthful lover, if he had not endeavoured to avail himself of this opportunity.

"I have been longing this whole evening to ask of you, fair Catherine," said the page, "how foolish and unapprehensive you must have thought me, in being capable to mistake betwixt your brother and you?"

"The circumstance does indeed little honour to my rustic manners," said Catherine, "since those of a wild young man were so readily mistaken for mine. But I shall grow wiser in time; and with that view I am determined not to think of your follies, but to correct my own."

"It will be the lighter subject of meditation of the two," said Roland.

"I know not that," said Catherine very gravely; "I fear we have been both unpardonably foolish."

"I have been mad," said Roland, "unpardonably mad. But you, lovely Catherine—"

"I," said Catherine in the same tone of unusual gravity, "have too long suffered you to use such expressions towards me—I fear I can permit it no longer, and I blame myself for the pain it may give you."

"And what can have happened so suddenly to change our relation to each other, or alter, with such sudden cruelty, your whole deportment to me?"

"I can hardly tell," replied Catherine, "unless it is that the events of the day have impressed on my mind the necessity of our observing more distance to each other. A chance similar to that which betrayed to you

the existence of my brother, may make known to Henry the terms you have used to me; and, alas! his whole conduct, as well as his deed this day, makes me too justly apprehensive of the consequences."

"Fear nothing for that, fair Catherine," answered the page; "I am well able to protect myself against risks of that nature."

"That is to say," replied she, "that you would fight with my twin-brother to show your regard for his sister? I have heard the Queen say, in her sad hours, that men are, in love or in hate, the most selfish animals of creation; and your carelessness in this matter looks very like it. But be not so much abashed—you are no worse than others."

"You do me injustice, Catherine," replied the page, "I thought but of being threatened with a sword, and did not remember in whose hand your fancy had placed it. If your brother stood before me, with his drawn weapon in his hand, so like as he is to you in word, person, and favour, he might shed my life's blood ere I could find in my heart to resist him to his injury."

"Alas!" said she, "it is not my brother alone. But you remember only the singular circumstances in which we have met in equality, and I may say in intimacy. You think not, that whenever I re-enter my father's house, there is a gulf between us you may not pass, but with peril of your life. Your only known relative is of wild and singular habits, of a hostile and broken clan—the rest of your lineage unknown—forgive me that I speak what is the undeniable truth."

"Love, my beautiful Catherine, despises genealogies," answered Roland Græme.

"Love may, but so will not the Lord Seyton," rejoined the damsel.

"The Queen, thy mistress and mine, she will intercede. Oh! drive me not from you at the moment I thought myself most happy!—and if I shall aid her deliverance, said not yourself that you and she would become my debtors?"

"All Scotland will become your debtors," said Catherine; "but for the active effects you might hope from our gratitude, you must remember I am wholly subjected to my father; and the poor Queen is, for a long time, more likely to be dependent on the pleasure of the nobles of her party, than possessed of power to control them."

"Be it so," replied Roland; "my deeds shall control prejudice itself—it is a bustling world, and I will have my share. The Knight of Avenel, high as he now stands, rose from as obscure an origin as mine."

"Ay!" said Catherine, "there spoke the doughty knight of romance, that will cut his way to the imprisoned princess, through fiends and fiery dragons!"

"But if I can set the princess at large, and procure her the freedom of her own choice," said the page, "where, dearest Catherine, will that choice alight?"

"Release the princess from duress, and she will tell you," said the damsel, and breaking off the conversation abruptly, she joined the Queen so suddenly, that Mary exclaimed, half aloud—

"No more tidings of evil import—no dissension, I trust, in my limited household?" Then looking on Catherine's blushing cheek, and Roland's expanded brow and glancing eye, "No, no," she said, "I see all is well—*Ma petite mignône*, go to my apartment and fetch me down—let me see—ay, fetch my pomander box."

XXV.

And having thus disposed of her attendant in the manner best qualified to hide her confusion, the Queen added, speaking apart to Roland, "I should at least have two grateful subjects of Catherine and you; for what sovereign but Mary would aid true love so willingly? Ay, you lay your hand on your sword. Well, short time will show if all the good be true that is protested to us—I hear them toll curfew from Kinross. To our chamber—this old dame hath promised to be with us again at our evening meal. Were it not for the hope of speedy deliverance, her presence would drive me distracted. But I will be patient."

"I profess," said Catherine, who just then entered, "I would I could be Henry, with all a man's privileges, for one moment—I long to throw my plate at that confect of pride and formality, and ill-nature."

The Lady Fleming reprimanded her young companion for this explosion of impatience; the Queen laughed, and they went to the presence-chamber, where almost immediately entered supper, and the lady of the castle. The Queen, strong in her prudent resolutions, endured her presence with great fortitude and equanimity, until her patience was disturbed by a new form, which had hitherto made no part of the ceremonial of the castle. When the other attendant had retired, Randal entered, bearing the keys of the castle fastened upon a chain, and, announcing that the watch was set, and the gates locked, delivered the keys with all reverence to the Lady of Lochleven.

The Queen and her ladies exchanged with each other a look of disappointment, anger, and vexation; and Mary

said aloud, "We cannot regret the smallness of our court, when we see our hostess discharge in person so many of its offices. In addition to her charges of principal steward of our household and grand almoner, she has to-night done duty as captain of our guard."

"And will continue to do so in future, madam," answered the Lady Lochleven with much gravity; "the history of Scotland may teach me how ill the duty is performed, which is done by an accredited deputy. We have heard, madam, of favourites of later date, and as little merit, as Oliver Sinclair."

"Oh, madam," replied the Queen, "my father had his female as well as his male favourites—but their names cannot survive in the memory of so grave a person as you."

The Lady Lochleven looked as if she could have slain the Queen on the spot, but commanded her temper, and retired from the apartment, bearing in her hand the ponderous bunch of keys.

"But how say you, girls—here is a new difficulty—How are these keys to be come by?—there is no deceiving or bribing this dragon, I trow."

"May I crave to know," said Roland, "whether, if your Grace were beyond the walls of the castle, you could find means of conveyance to the firm land, and protection when you are there?"

"Trust us for that, Roland," said the Queen; "for to that point our scheme is indifferent well laid."

"Then if your Grace will permit me to speak my mind, I think I could be of some use in this matter."

"As how, my good youth?—speak on," said the Queen, "and fearlessly."

"My patron the Knight of Avenel used to compel the youth educated in his household to learn the use of axe

and hammer, and working in wood and iron—he used to speak of old northern champions, who forged their own weapons, and of the Highland Captain, Donald of the Hammer, whom he himself knew, and who used to work at the anvil with a sledge-hammer in each hand. Some said he praised this art, because he was himself of churl's blood. However, I gained some practice in it, as the Lady Catherine Seyton partly knows; for since we were here, I wrought her a silver brooch."

"Ay," replied Catherine, "but you should tell her Grace that your workmanship was so indifferent that it broke to pieces next day, and I flung it away."

"Believe her not, Roland," said the Queen; "she wept when it was broken, and put the fragments into her bosom. But for your scheme—could your skill avail to forge a second set of keys!"

"No, madam, because I know not the wards. But I am convinced I could make a set so like that hateful bunch which the Lady bore off even now, that could they be exchanged against them by any means, she would never dream she was possessed of the wrong."

"And the good dame, thank Heaven, is somewhat blind," said the Queen; "but then for a forge my boy, and the means of labouring unobserved?"

"The armourer's forge, at which I used sometimes to work with him, is the round vault at the bottom of the turret—he was dismissed with the warder for being supposed too much attached to George Douglas. The people are accustomed to see me work there, and I warrant I shall find some excuse that will pass current with them for putting bellows and anvil to work."

"The scheme has a promising face," said the Queen; "about it, my lad, with all speed, and beware the nature of your work is not discovered."

"Nay, I will take the liberty to draw the bolt against chance visitors, so that I will have time to put away what I am working upon, before I undo the door."

"Will not that of itself attract suspicion, in a place where it is so current already?" said Catherine.

"Not a whit," replied Roland; "Gregory the armourer, and every good hammerman, locks himself in when he is about some masterpiece of craft. Besides, something must be risked."

"Part we then to-night," said the Queen, "and God bless you, my children!—If Mary's head ever rises above water, you shall all rise along with her."

XXVI.

The enterprise of Roland Græme appeared to prosper. A trinket or two, of which the work did not surpass the substance, (for the materials were silver, supplied by the Queen,) were judiciously presented to those most likely to be inquisitive into the labours of the forge and anvil, which they thus were induced to reckon profitable to others and harmless in itself. Openly, the page was seen working about such trifles. In private, he forged a number of keys resembling so nearly in weight and in form those which were presented every evening to the Lady Lochleven, that, on a slight inspection, it would have been difficult to perceive the difference. He brought them to the dark rusty colour by the use of salt and water; and, in the triumph of his art, presented them at length to Queen Mary in her presence-chamber, about an hour before the tolling of the curfew. She looked at them with pleasure, but at the same time with doubt.—"I allow," she said, "that the Lady Lochleven's eyes, which are not of the clearest, may be well deceived, could we

pass those keys on her in place of the real implements of her tyranny. But how is this to be done, and which of my little court dare attempt this *tour de jongleur* with any chance of success? Could we but engage her in some earnest matter of argument—but those which I hold with her, always have been of a kind which made her grasp her keys the faster, as if she said to herself—Here I hold what sets me above your taunts and reproaches—And even for her liberty, Mary Stewart could not stoop to speak the proud heretic fair.—What shall we do? Shall Lady Fleming try her eloquence in describing the last new head-tire from Paris?—alas! the good dame has not changed the fashion of her head-gear since Pinkie-field, for aught that I know. Shall my *mignône* Catherine sing to her one of those touching airs, which draw the very souls out of me and Roland Græme?—Alas! Dame Margaret Douglas would rather hear a Huguenot psalm. Cousins and liege counsellors, what is to be done, for our wits are really astray in this matter?—Must our man-at-arms and the champion of our body, Roland Græme, manfully assault the old lady, and take the keys from her *par voie du fait*?”

“Nay! with your Grace’s permission,” said Roland, “I do not doubt being able to manage the matter with more discretion; for though, in your Grace’s service, I do not fear—”

“A host of old women,” interrupted Catherine, “each armed with rock and spindle, yet he has no fancy for pikes and partisans, which might rise at the cry of *Help! a Douglas, a Douglas!*”

“They that do not fear fair ladies’ tongues,” continued the page, “need dread nothing else.—But, gracious Liege, I am well-nigh satisfied that I could pass the exchange of these keys on the Lady Lochleven; but I dread the

sentinel who is now planted nightly in the garden, which, by necessity, we must traverse."

"Our last advices from our friends on the shore have promised us assistance in that matter," replied the Queen.

"And is your Grace well assured of the fidelity and watchfulness of those without?"

"For their fidelity, I will answer with my life, and for their vigilance, I will answer with my life—I will give the instant proof, my faithful Roland, that they are ingenuous and trusty as thyself. Come hither—Nay, Catherine, attend us; we carry not so deft a page into our private chamber alone. Make fast the door of the parlour, Fleming, and warn us if you hear the least step—or stay, go thou to the door, Catherine," (in a whisper, "thy ears and thy wits are both sharper.)—Good Fleming, attend us thyself"—(and again she whispered, "her reverend presence will be as safe a watch on Roland as thine can—so be not jealous, *mignône*.")

Thus speaking, they were lighted by the Lady Fleming into the Queen's bedroom, a small apartment enlightened by a projecting window.

"Look from that window, Roland," she said; "see you amongst the several lights which begin to kindle, and to glimmer palely through the gray of the evening from the village of Kinross—seest thou, I say, one solitary spark apart from the others, and nearer it seems to the verge of the water?—It is no brighter at this distance than the torch of the poor glow-worm, and yet, my good youth, that light is more dear to Mary Stewart, than every star that twinkles in the blue vault of heaven. By that signal, I know that more than one true heart is plotting my deliverance; and without that consciousness, and the hope of freedom it gives me, I had long since stooped to my fate, and died of a broken heart. Plan after plan

has been formed and abandoned, but still the light glimmers; and while it glimmers, my hope lives.—Oh! how many evenings have I sat musing in despair over our ruined schemes, and scarce hoping that I should again see that blessed signal; when it has suddenly kindled, and, like the lights of Saint Elmo in a tempest, brought hope and consolation, where there was only dejection and despair!”

“If I mistake not,” answered Roland, “the candle shines from the house of Blinkhoolie, the mail-gardener.”

“Thou hast a good eye,” said the Queen; “it is there where my trusty lieges—God and the saints pour blessings on them!—hold consultation for my deliverance. The voice of a wretched captive would die on these blue waters, long ere it could mingle in their councils; and yet I can hold communication—I will confide the whole to thee—I am about to ask those faithful friends, if the moment for the great attempt is nigh.—Place the lamp in the window, Fleming.”

She obeyed, and immediately withdrew it. No sooner had she done so, than the light in the cottage of the gardener disappeared.

“Now, count,” said Queen Mary, “for my heart beats so thick that I cannot count myself.”

The Lady Fleming began deliberately to count one, two, three, and when she had arrived at ten, the light on the shore again showed its pale twinkle.

“Now, our Lady be praised!” said the Queen; “it was but two nights since, that the absence of the light remained, while I could tell thirty. The hour of deliverance approaches. May God bless those who labour in it with such truth to me!—alas! with such hazard to themselves—and bless you too, my children!—Come, we

must to the audience-chamber again. Our absence might excite suspicion, should they serve supper."

They returned to the presence-chamber, and the evening concluded as usual.

XXVII

The next morning, at dinner-time, an unusual incident occurred. While Lady Douglas of Lochleven performed her daily duty of assistant and taster at the Queen's table, she was told a man-at-arms had arrived, recommended by her son, but without any letter or other token than what he brought by word of mouth.

"Hath he given you that token?" demanded the Lady.

"He reserved it, as I think, for your Ladyship's ear," replied Randal.

"He doth well," said the Lady; "tell him to wait in the hall—But no—with your permission, madam," (to the Queen) "let him attend me here."

"Since you are pleased to receive your domestics in my presence," said the Queen, "I cannot choose—"

"My infirmities must plead my excuse, madam," replied the Lady; "the life I must lead here ill suits with the years which have passed over my head, and compels me to wave ceremonial."

"Oh, my good Lady," replied the Queen, "I would there were nought in this your castle more strongly compulsive than the cobweb chains of ceremony; but bolts and bars are harder matters to contend with."

As she spoke, the person announced by Randal entered the room, and Roland Grame at once recognized in him the Abbot Ambrosius.

"What is your name, good fellow?" said the Lady.

"Edward Glendinning," answered the Abbot with a suitable reverence.

"Art thou of the blood of the Knight of Avenel?" said the Lady of Lochleven:

"Ay, madam, and that nearly," replied the pretended soldier.

"It is likely enough," said the Lady, "for the Knight is the son of his own good works, and has risen from obscure lineage to his present high rank in the Estate—But he is of sure truth and approved worth, and his kinsman is welcome to us. You hold, unquestionably, the true faith?"

"Do not doubt of it, madam," said the disguised churchman.

"Hast thou a token to me from Sir William Douglas?" said the Lady.

"I have, madam," replied he; "but it must be said in private."

"Thou art right," said the Lady, moving towards the recess of a window; "say in what does it consist?"

"In the words of an old bard," replied the Abbot.

"Repeat them," answered the Lady; and he uttered in a low tone, the lines from an old poem, called *The Howlet*,—

"O, Douglas! Douglas!
Tender and true."

"Trusty Sir John Holland!" said the Lady Douglas, apostrophizing the poet, "a kinder heart never inspired a rhyme, and the Douglas's honour was ever on thy heart-string! We receive you among our followers, Glendinning—But, Randal, see that he keep the outer ward only, till we shall hear more touching him from our son.—Thou fearest not the night air, Glendinning?"

"In the cause of the Lady before whom I stand, I fear nothing, madam," answered the disguised Abbot.

"Our garrison, then, is stronger by one trustworthy soldier," said the matron—"Go to the buttery, and let them make much of thee."

When the Lady Lochleven had retired, the Queen said to Roland Græme, who was now almost constantly in her company, "I spy comfort in that stranger's countenance; I know not why it should be so, but I am well persuaded he is a friend."

"Your Grace's penetration does not deceive you," answered the page; and he informed her that the Abbot of Saint Mary's himself played the part of the newly arrived soldier.

The Queen crossed herself and looked upwards. "Unworthy sinner that I am," she said, "that for my sake a man so holy, and so high in spiritual office, should wear the garb of a base sworder, and run the risk of dying the death of a traitor!"

"Heaven will protect its own servant, madam," said Catherine Seyton; "his aid would bring a blessing on our undertaking, were it not already blest for its own sake."

"What I admire in my spiritual father," said Roland, "was the steady front with which he looked on me, without giving the least sign of former acquaintance. I did not think the like was possible, since I have ceased to believe that Henry was the same person with Catherine."

"But marked you not how astuciously the good father," said the Queen, "eluded the questions of the woman Lochleven, telling her the very truth, which yet she received not as such."

Roland thought in his heart, that when the truth was spoken for the purpose of deceiving, it was little better

than a lie in disguise. But it was no time to agitate such questions of conscience.

"And now for the signal from the shore," exclaimed Catherine; "my bosom tells me we shall see this night two lights instead of one gleam from that garden of Eden—And then, Roland, do you play your part manfully, and we will dance on the greensward like midnight fairies!"

Catherine's conjecture misgave not, nor deceived her. In the evening two beams twinkled from the cottage, instead of one; and the page heard, with beating heart, that the new retainer was ordered to stand sentinel on the outside of the castle. When he intimated this news to the Queen, she held her hand out to him—he knelt, and when he raised it to his lips in all dutiful homage, he found it was damp and cold as marble. "For God's sake, madam, droop not now—sink not now!"

"Call upon our Lady, my Liege," said the Lady Fleming—"call upon your tutelar saint."

"Call the spirits of the hundred kings you are descended from," exclaimed the page; "in this hour of need, the resolution of a monarch were worth the aid of a hundred saints."

"Oh! Roland Græme," said Mary, in a tone of deep despondency, "be true to me—many have been false to me. Alas! I have not always been true to myself. My mind misgives me that I shall die in bondage, and that this bold attempt will cost all our lives. It was foretold me by a soothsayer in France, that I should die in prison, and by a violent death, and here comes the hour—Oh, would to God it found me prepared!"

"Madam," said Catherine Seyton, "remember you are a Queen. Better we all died in bravely attempting to gain our freedom, than remain here to be poisoned, as

men rid them of the noxious vermin that haunt old houses."

"You are right, Catherine," said the Queen; "and Mary will bear her like herself. But alas! your young and buoyant spirit can ill spell the causes which have broken mine. Forgive me, my children, and farewell for a while—I will prepare both mind and body for this awful venture."

XXVIII

They separated, till again called together by the tolling of the curfew. The Queen appeared grave, but firm and resolved; the Lady Fleming, with the art of an experienced courtier, knew perfectly how to disguise her inward tremors; Catherine's eye was fired, as if with the boldness of the project, and the half smile which dwelt upon her beautiful mouth seemed to condemn all the risk and all the consequences of discovery; Roland, who felt how much success depended on his own address and boldness, summoned together his whole presence of mind, and if he found his spirits flag for a moment, cast his eyes upon Catherine, whom he thought he had never seen look so beautiful.—"I may be foiled," he thought, "but with this reward in prospect, they must bring the devil to aid them ere they cross me." Thus resolved, he stood, like a greyhound in the slips, with hand, heart, and eye intent upon making and seizing opportunity for the execution of their project.

The keys had, with the wonted ceremonial, been presented to the Lady Lochleven. She stood with her back to the casement, which, like that of the Queen's apartment, commanded a view of Kinross, with the church, which stands at some distance from the town, and nearer to the lake, then connected with the town by straggling

cottages. With her back to this casement, then, and her face to the table, on which the keys lay for an instant while she tasted the various dishes which were placed there, stood the Lady of Lochleven, more provokingly intent than usual—so at least it seemed to her prisoners—upon the huge and heavy bunch of iron, the implements of their restraint. Just when, having finished her ceremony as taster of the Queen's table, she was about to take up the keys, the page who stood beside her, and had handed her the dishes in succession, looked sideways to the churchyard, and exclaimed he saw corpse-candles in the churchyard. The Lady of Lochleven was not without a touch, though a slight one, of the superstitions of the time; the fate of her sons made her alive to omens, and a corpse-light, as it was called, in the family burial-place, boded death. She turned her head towards the casement—saw a distant glimmering—forgot her charge for one second, and in that second were lost the whole fruits of her former vigilance. The page held the forged keys under his cloak, and with great dexterity exchanged them for the real ones. His utmost address could not prevent a slight clash as he took up the latter bunch. "Who touches the keys?" said the Lady; and while the page answered that the sleeve of his cloak had stirred them, she looked round, possessed herself of the bunch which now occupied the place of the genuine keys, and again turned to gaze on the supposed corpse-candles.

"I hold these gleams," she said, after a moment's consideration, "to come, not from the churchyard, but from the hut of the old gardener Blinkhoolie. I wonder what thrift that churl drives, that of late he hath ever had light in his house till the night grew deep. I thought him an industrious, peaceful man—If he turns resetter of idle companions and night-walkers, the place must be rid of him."

"He may work his baskets perchance," said the page, desirous to stop the train of her suspicion.

"Or nets, may he not?" answered the Lady.

"Ay, madam," said Roland, "for trout and salmon."

"Or for fools and knaves," replied the Lady; "but this shall be looked after to-morrow.—I wish your Grace and your company a good evening.—Randal, attend us." And Randal, who waited in the ante-chamber after having surrendered his bunch of keys, gave his escort to his mistress as usual, while, leaving the Queen's apartments, she retired to her own.

"To-morrow!" said the page, rubbing his hands with glee as he repeated the Lady's last words, "fools look to to-morrow, and wise folk use to-night.—May I pray you, my gracious Liege, to retire for one half hour, until all the castle is composed to rest? I must go and rub with oil these blessed implements of our freedom. Courage and constancy, and all will go well, provided our friends on the shore fail not to send the boat you spoke of."

"Fear them not," said Catherine, "they are true as steel—if our dear mistress do but maintain her noble and royal courage."

"Doubt not me, Catherine," replied the Queen; "a while since I was overborne, but I have recalled the spirit of my earlier and more sprightly days, when I used to accompany my armed nobles, and wish to be myself a man, to know what life it was to be in the fields with sword and buckler, jack and knapsack."

"Oh, the lark lives not a gayer life, nor sings a lighter and gayer song than the merry soldier," answered Catherine. "Your Grace shall be in the midst of them soon, and the look of such a liege Sovereign will make each of your host worth three in the hour of need:—but I must to my task."

"We have but brief time," said Queen Mary; "one of the two lights in the cottage is extinguished—that shows the boat is put off."

"They will row very slow," said the page, "or kent where depth permits, to avoid noise.—To our several tasks—I will communicate with the good Father."

At the dead hour of midnight, when all was silent in the castle, the page put the key into the lock of the wicket, which opened into the garden, and which was at the bottom of a staircase which descended from the Queen's apartment. "Now, turn smooth and softly, thou good bolt," said he, "if ever oil softened rust!" and his precautions had been so effectual, that the bolt revolved with little or no sound of resistance. He ventured not to cross the threshold, but exchanging a word with the disguised Abbot, asked if the boat were ready?

"This half hour," said the sentinel. "She lies beneath the wall, too close under the islet to be seen by the warder, but I fear she will hardly escape his notice in putting off again."

"The darkness," said the page, "and our profound silence, may take her off unobserved, as she came in. Hildebrand has the watch on the tower—a heavy-headed knave, who holds a can of ale to be the best headpiece upon a night-watch. He sleeps for a wager."

"Then bring the Queen," said the Abbot, "and I will call Henry Seyton to assist them to the boat."

On tiptoe, with noiseless step and suppressed breath, trembling at every rustle of their own apparel, one after another the fair prisoners glided down the winding stair, under the guidance of Roland Græme, and were received at the wicket-gate by Henry Seyton and the churchman. The former seemed instantly to take upon himself the whole direction of the enterprise. "My Lord Abbot," he

said, "give my sister your arm—I will conduct the Queen—and that youth will have the honour to guide Lady Fleming."

This was no time to dispute the arrangement, although it was not that which Roland Græme would have chosen. Catherine Seyton, who well knew the garden path, tripped on before like a sylph, rather leading the Abbot than receiving assistance—the Queen, her native spirit prevailing over female fear, and a thousand painful reflections, moved steadily forward, by the assistance of Henry Seyton—while the Lady Fleming encumbered with her fears and her helplessness Roland Græme, who followed in the rear, and who bore under the other arm a packet of necessaries belonging to the Queen. The door of the garden, which communicated with the shore of the islet, yielded to one of the keys of which Roland had possessed himself, although not until he had tried several,—a moment of anxious terror and expectation. The ladies were then partly led, partly carried, to the side of the lake, where a boat with six rowers attended them, the men couched along the bottom to secure them from observation. Henry Seyton placed the Queen in the stern; the Abbot offered to assist Catherine, but she was seated by the Queen's side before he could utter his proffer of help; and Roland Græme was just lifting Lady Fleming over the boat-side, when a thought suddenly occurred to him, and exclaiming, "Forgotten, forgotten! wait for me but one half minute," he replaced on the shore the helpless Lady of the bed-chamber, threw the Queen's packet into the boat, and sped back through the garden with the noiseless speed of a bird on the wing.

"By Heaven, he is false at last!" said Seyton; "I ever feared it!"

"He is as true," said Catherine, "as Heaven itself, and that I will maintain."

"Be silent, minion," said her brother, "for shame, if not for fear—Fellows, put off, and row for your lives!"

"Help me, help me on board!" said the deserted Lady Fleming, and that louder than prudence warranted.

"Put off—put off!" cried Henry Seyton; "leave all behind, so the Queen is safe."

"Will you permit this, madam?" said Catherine, imploringly; "you leave your deliverer to death."

"I will not," said the Queen.—"Seyton, I command you to stay at every risk."

"Pardon me, madam, if I disobey," said the intractable young man; and with one hand lifting in Lady Fleming, he began himself to push off the boat.

She was two fathoms' length from the shore, and the rowers were getting her head round, when Roland Græme, arriving, bounded from the beach, and attained the boat, overturning Seyton, on whom he lighted. The youth swore a deep but suppressed oath, and stopping Græme as he stepped towards the stern said, "Your place is not with high-born dames—keep at the head and trim the vessel—Now give way—give way—Row, for God and the Queen!"

The rowers obeyed, and began to pull vigorously.

"Why did ye not muffle the oars?" said Roland Græme; "the dash must awaken the sentinel—Row, lads, and get out of reach of shot; for had not old Hildebrand, the warder, supped upon poppy-porridge, this whispering must have waked him."

"It was all thine own delay," said Seyton; "thou shalt reckon with me hereafter for that and other matters."

But Roland's apprehension was verified too instantly to permit him to reply. The sentinel, whose slumbering had withstood the whispering, was alarmed by the dash of the oars. His challenge was instantly heard. "A

boat—a boat!—bring to, or I shoot!” And, as they continued to ply their oars, he called aloud, “Treason! treason!” rung the bell of the castle, and discharged his harquebuss at the boat. The ladies crowded on each other like startled wild-fowl at the flash and report of the piece, while the men urged the rowers to the utmost speed. They heard more than one ball whiz along the surface of the lake, at no great distance from their little bark; and from the lights, which glanced like meteors from window to window, it was evident the whole castle was alarmed, and their escape discovered.

“Pull!” again exclaimed Seyton; “stretch to your oars, or I will spur you to the task with my dagger—they will launch a boat immediately.”

“That is cared for,” said Roland; “I locked gate and wicket on them when I went back, and no boat will stir from the island this night, if doors of good oak and bolts of iron can keep men within stone-walls. And now I resign my office of porter of Lochleven, and give the keys to the Kelpie’s keeping.”

As the heavy keys plunged in the lake, the Abbot, who till then had been repeating his prayers, exclaimed, “Now, bless thee, my son! for thy ready prudence puts shame on us all.”

“I knew,” said Mary, drawing her breath more freely, as they were now out of reach of the musketry—“I knew my squire’s truth, promptitude, and sagacity. I must have him dear friends with my no less true knights, Douglas and Seyton—but where, then, is Douglas?”

“Here, madam,” answered the deep and melancholy voice of the boatman who sat next her, and who acted as steersman.

“Alas! was it you who stretched your body before me,” said the Queen, “when the balls were raining around us?”

"Believe you," said he in a low tone, "that Douglas would have resigned to any one the chance of protecting his Queen's life with his own?"

XXIX.

The dialogue was here interrupted by a shot or two from one of those small pieces of artillery called falconets, then used in defending castles. The shot was too vague to have any effect, but the broader flash, the deeper sound, the louder return which was made by the midnight echoes of Bennarty, terrified and imposed silence on the liberated prisoners. The boat was alongside of a rude quay or landing-place, running out from a garden of considerable extent, ere any of them again attempted to speak. They landed, and while the Abbot returned thanks aloud to Heaven, which had thus far favoured their enterprise, Douglas enjoyed the best reward of his desperate undertaking in conducting the Queen to the house of the gardener. Yet, not unmindful of Roland Græme even in that moment of terror and exhaustion, Mary expressly commanded Seyton to give his assistance to Fleming, while Catherine voluntarily, and without bidding, took the arm of the page. Seyton presently resigned Lady Fleming to the care of the Abbot, alleging he must look after their horses; and his attendants, disencumbering themselves of their boat-cloaks, hastened to assist him.

While Mary spent in the gardener's cottage the few minutes which were necessary to prepare the steeds for their departure, she perceived in a corner, the old man to whom the garden belonged, and called him to approach. He came as it were with reluctance.

"How, brother," said the Abbot, "so slow to welcome

thy royal Queen and mistress to liberty and to her kingdom?"

The old man, thus admonished, came forward, and, in good terms of speech, gave her Grace joy of her deliverance. The Queen returned him thanks in the most gracious manner, and added, "It will remain to us to offer some immediate reward for your fidelity, for we wot well your house has been long the refuge in which our trusty servants have met to concert measures for our freedom." So saying, she offered gold, and added, "We will consider your services more fully hereafter."

"Kneel, brother," said the Abbot, "kneel instantly, and thank her Grace's kindness."

"Good brother, that wert once a few steps under me, and art still many years younger," replied the gardener, pettishly, "let me do mine acknowledgments in my own way. Queens have knelt to me ere now, and in truth my knees are too old and stiff to bend even to this lovely-faced lady. May it please your Grace, if your Grace's servants have occupied my house, so that I could not call it mine own—if they have trodden down my flowers in the zeal of their midnight comings and goings, and destroyed the hope of the fruit season by bringing their war horses into my garden, I do but crave of your Grace in requital, that you will choose your residence as far from me as possible. I am an old man, who would willingly creep to my grave as easily as he can, in peace, good-will, and quiet labour."

"I promise you fairly, good man," said the Queen, "I will not make yonder castle my residence again, if I can help it. But let me press on you this money—it will make some amends for the havoc we have made in your little garden and orchard."

"I thank your Grace, but it will make me not the

least amends," said the old man. "The ruined labours of a whole year are not so easily replaced to him who has perchance but that one year to live; and besides, they tell me I must leave this place and become a wanderer in mine old age—I that have nothing on earth saving these fruit-trees, and a few old parchments and family secrets not worth knowing. As for gold, if I had loved it, I might have remained Lord Abbot of Saint Mary's—and yet, I wot not—for, if Abbot Boniface be but the poor peasant Blinkhoolie, his successor, the Abbot Ambrosius, is still transmuted for the worse into the guise of a sword-and-buckler-man."

"Is this indeed the Abbot Boniface of whom I have heard?" said the Queen. "It is indeed I who should have bent the knee for your blessing, good Father."

"Bend no knee to me, Lady! The blessing of an old man, who is no longer an Abbot, go with you over dale and down—I hear the trampling of your horses."

"Farewell, Father," said the Queen. "When we are once more seated at Holyrood, we will neither forget thee nor thine injured garden."

"Forget us both," said the Ex-Abbot Boniface, "and may God be with you!"

As they hurried out of the house they heard the old man talking and muttering to himself, as he hastily drew bolt and bar behind them.

"The revenge of the Douglasses will reach the poor old man," said the Queen. "God help me, I ruin every one whom I approach!"

"His safety is cared for," said Seyton; "he must not remain here, but will be privately conducted to a place of greater security. But I would your Grace were in the saddle. To horse! to horse!"

The party of Seyton and of Douglas were increased to

about ten by those attendants who had remained with the horses. The Queen and her ladies, with all the rest who came from the boat, were instantly mounted; and holding aloof from the village, which was already alarmed by the firing from the castle, with Douglas acting as their guide, they soon reached the open ground and began to ride as fast as was consistent with keeping together in good order.

XXX.

The influence of the free air, the rushing of the horses over high and low, the ringing of the bridles, the excitation at once arising from a sense of freedom and of rapid motion, gradually dispelled the confused and dejected sort of stupefaction by which Queen Mary was at first overwhelmed. She could not at last conceal the change of her feelings to the person who rode at her rein, and who she doubted not was the Father Ambrosius; for Seyton, with all the heady impetuosity of a youth, proud, and justly so, of his first successful adventure, assumed all the bustle and importance of commander of the little party, which escorted, in the language of the time, the Fortune of Scotland. He now led the van, now checked his bounding steed till the rear had come up, exhorted the leaders to keep a steady though rapid pace, and commanded those who were hindmost of the party to use their spurs, and allow no interval to take place in their line of march; and anon he was beside the Queen, or her ladies, inquiring how they brooked the hasty journey, and whether they had any commands for him. But while Seyton thus busied himself in the general cause with some advantage to the regular order of the march, and a good deal of personal ostentation, the horseman who rode beside the Queen gave her his full and undivided atten-

tion, as if he had been waiting upon some superior being. When the road was rugged and dangerous, he abandoned almost entirely the care of his own horse, and kept his hand constantly upon the Queen's bridle; if a river or larger brook traversed their course, his left arm retained her in the saddle, while his right held her palfrey's rein.

"I had not thought, reverend Father," said the Queen, when they reached the other bank, "that the convent bred such good horsemen."—The person she addressed sighed, but made no other answer.—"I know not how it is," said Queen Mary, "but either the sense of freedom, or the pleasure of my favourite exercise, from which I have been so long debarred, or both combined, seem to have given wings to me—no fish ever shot through the water, no bird through the air, with the hurried feeling of liberty and rapture with which I sweep through this night-wind, and over these wolds. Nay, such is the magic of feeling myself once more in the saddle, that I could almost swear I am at this moment mounted on my own favourite Rosabelle, who was never matched in Scotland for swiftness, for ease of motion, and for sureness of foot."

"And if the horse which bears so dear a burden could speak," answered the deep voice of the melancholy George of Douglas, "would she not reply, who but Rosabelle ought at such an emergence as this to serve her beloved mistress, or who but Douglas ought to hold her bridle-rein?"

Queen Mary started; she foresaw at once all the evils like to arise to herself and him from the deep enthusiastic passion of this youth; but her feelings as a woman, grateful at once and compassionate, prevented her assuming the dignity of a Queen, and she endeavoured to continue the conversation in an indifferent tone.

"Methought," she said, "I heard that, at the division of my spoils, Rosabelle had become the property of Lord Morton's ladye-love, Alice."

"The noble palfrey had indeed been destined to so base a lot," answered Douglas; "she was kept under four keys, and under the charge of a numerous crew of grooms and domestics—but Queen Mary needed Rosabelle, and Rosabelle is here."

"And was it well, Douglas," said Queen Mary, "when such fearful risks of various kinds must needs be encountered, that you should augment their perils to yourself, for a subject of so little moment as a palfrey?"

"Do you call that of little moment," answered Douglas, "which has afforded you a moment's pleasure?—Did you not start with joy when I first said you were mounted on Rosabelle?—And to purchase you that pleasure, though it were to last no longer than the flash of lightning doth, would not Douglas have risked his life a thousand times?"

"Oh, peace, Douglas, peace," said the Queen, "this is unfitting language; and, besides, I would speak," said she, recollecting herself, "with the Abbot of St. Mary's—Nay, Douglas, I will not let you quit my rein in displeasure."

"Displeasure, Lady!" answered Douglas; "alas! sorrow is all that I can feel for your well-warranted contempt—I should be as soon displeased with Heaven for refusing the wildest wish which mortal can form."

"Abide by my rein, however," said Mary, "there is room for my Lord Abbot on the other side; and, besides, I doubt if his assistance would be so useful to Rosabelle and me as yours has been, should the road again require it."

The Abbot came up on the other side, and she immediately opened a conversation with him on the topic of

the state of parties, and the plan fittest for her to pursue in consequence of her deliverance. In this conversation Douglas took little share, and never but when directly applied to by the Queen, while, as before, his attention seemed entirely engrossed by the care of Mary's personal safety. She learned, however, she had a new obligation to him, since, by his contrivance, the Abbot, whom he had furnished with the family pass-word, was introduced into the castle as one of the garrison.

Long before daybreak they ended their hasty and perilous journey before the gates of Niddrie, a castle in West Lothian, belonging to Lord Seyton. When the Queen was about to alight Henry Seyton, preventing Douglas, received her in his arms, and, kneeling down, prayed her Majesty to enter the house of his father, her faithful servant.

"Your Grace," he added, "may repose yourself here in perfect safety—it is already garrisoned with good men for your protection; and I have sent a post to my father, whose instant arrival, at the head of five hundred men, may be looked for. Do not dismay yourself, therefore, should your sleep be broken by the trampling of horse; but only think that here are some scores more of the saucy Seytons come to attend you."

"And by better friends than the Saucy Seytons, a Scottish Queen cannot be guarded," replied Mary. "Rosalbelle went fleet as the summer breeze, and well-nigh as easy; but it is long since I have been a traveller, and I feel that repose will be welcome.—Catherine, *ma mignône*, you must sleep in my apartment to-night, and bid me welcome to your noble father's castle.—Thanks, thanks to all my kind deliverers—thanks, and a good night is all I can now offer; but if I climb once more to the upper side of Fortune's wheel, I will not have her bandage.

Mary Stewart will keep her eyes open, and distinguish her friends.—Seyton, I need scarcely recommend the venerable Abbot, the Douglas, and my page, to your honourable care and hospitality."

Henry Seyton bowed, and Catherine and Lady Fleming attended the Queen to her apartment; where, acknowledging to them that she should have found it difficult in that moment to keep her promise of holding her eyes open, she resigned herself to repose, and awakened not till the morning was advanced.

XXXI.

Mary's first feeling when she awoke was the doubt of her freedom; and the impulse prompted her to start from bed, and hastily throwing her mantle over her shoulders, to look out at the casement of her apartment. Oh, sight of joy! instead of the crystal sheet of Lochleven, unaltered save by the influence of the wind, a landscape of wood and moorland lay before her, and the park around the castle was occupied by the troops of her most faithful and most favourite nobles.

"Rise, rise, Catherine," cried the enraptured Princess; "arise and come hither!—here are swords and spears in true hands, and glittering armour on loyal breasts. Here are banners, my girl, floating in the wind, as lightly as summer clouds—Great God! what pleasure to my weary eyes to trace their devices—thine own brave father's—the princely Hamilton's—the faithful Fleming's—See—see they have caught a glimpse of me, and throng towards the window!"

She flung the casement open, and with her bare head, from which the tresses flew back loose and dishevelled, her fair arm slenderly veiled by her mantle, returned by

motion and sign the exulting shouts of the warriors, which echoed for many a furlong around. When the first burst of ecstatic joy was over, she recollected how lightly she was dressed, and, putting her hands to her face, which was covered with blushes at the recollection, withdrew abruptly from the window. The cause of her retreat was easily conjectured, and increased the general enthusiasm for a Princess, who had forgotten her rank in her haste to acknowledge the services of her subjects. The unadorned beauties of the lovely woman, too, moved the military spectators more than the highest display of her regal state might; and what might have seemed too free in her mode of appearing before them, was more than atoned for by the enthusiasm of the moment, and by the delicacy evinced in her hasty retreat. Often as the shouts died away, as often were they renewed till wood and hill rung again; and many a deep oath was made that morning on the cross of the sword, that the hand should not part with the weapon, till Mary Stewart was restored to her rights. But what are promises, what the hopes of mortals? In ten days these gallant and devoted votaries were slain, were captives, or had fled.

Mary flung herself into the nearest seat, and still blushing, yet half smiling, exclaimed, "*Ma mignône*, what will they think of me?—to shew myself to them with my bare feet hastily thrust into the slippers—only this loose mantle about me—my hair loose on my shoulders—my arms and neck so bare—Oh, the best they can suppose is, that her abode in yonder dungeon has turned their Queen's brain! But my rebel subjects saw me exposed when I was in the depth of affliction, why should I hold colder ceremony with these faithful and loyal men?—Call Fleming, however—I trust she has not for-

gotten the little mail with my apparel—We must be as brave as we can, *mignône*.”

“Nay, madam, our good Lady Fleming was in no case to remember any thing.”

“You jest, Catherine,” said the Queen somewhat offended; “it is not in her nature, surely, to forget her duty so far as to leave us without a change of apparel?”

“Roland Græme, madam, took care of that,” answered Catherine; “for he threw the mail, with your highness’s clothes and jewels, into the boat, ere he ran back to lock the gate—I never saw so awkward a page as that youth—the packet well-nigh fell on my head.”

“He shall make thy heart amends, my girl,” said Queen Mary, laughing, “for that and all other offences given. But call Fleming, and let us put ourselves into apparel to meet our faithful lords.”

Such had been the preparations, and such was the skill of Lady Fleming, that the Queen appeared before her assembled nobles in such attire as became, though it could not enhance, her natural dignity. With the most winning courtesy she expressed to each individual her grateful thanks, and dignified not only every noble, but many of the lesser barons by her particular attention.

“And whither now, my lords?” she said; “what way do your counsels determine for us?”

“To Draphane Castle,” replied Lord Arbroath, “if your Majesty is so pleased; and thence to Dunbarton, to place your Grace’s person in safety, after which we long to prove if these traitors will abide us in the field.”

“And when do we journey?”

“We propose,” said Lord Seyton, “if your Grace’s fatigue will permit, to take horse after the morning’s meal.”

“Your pleasure, my lords, is mine,” replied the Queen; “we will rule our journey by your wisdom now, and

hope hereafter to have the advantage of governing by it our kingdom. You will permit my ladies and me, my good lords, to break our fasts along with you—We must be half soldiers ourselves, and set state apart.”

Low bowed many a helmeted head at this gracious proffer, when the Queen, glancing her eyes through the assembled leaders, missed both Douglas and Roland Græme, and inquired for them in a whisper to Catherine Seyton.

“They are in yonder oratory, madam, sad enough,” replied Catherine; and the Queen observed that her favourite’s eyes were red with weeping.

“This must not be,” said the Queen. “Keep the company amused—I will seek them, and introduce them myself.”

She went into the oratory, where the first she met was George Douglas, standing, or rather reclining, in the recess of a window, his back rested against the wall, and his arms folded on his breast. At the sight of the Queen he started, and his countenance showed, for an instant, an expression of intense delight, which was instantly exchanged for his usual deep melancholy.

“What means this?” she said; “Douglas, why does the first deviser and bold executor of the happy scheme for our freedom, shun the company of his fellow-nobles, and of the Sovereign whom he has obliged?”

“Madam,” replied Douglas, “those whom you grace with your presence bring followers to aid your cause, wealth to support your state,—can offer you halls in which to feast, and impregnable castles for your defence. I am a houseless and landless man—disinherited by my mother, and laid under her malediction—disowned by my name and kindred—who bring nothing to your standard but a single sword, and the poor life of its owner.”

"Do you mean to upbraid me, Douglas," replied the Queen, "by showing what you have lost for my sake?"

"God forbid, madam!" interrupted the young man, eagerly; "were it to do again, and had I ten times as much rank and wealth, and twenty times as many friends to lose, my losses would be over-paid by the first step you made, as a free princess, upon the soil of your native kingdom."

"And what then ails you, that you will not rejoice with those who rejoice upon the same joyful occasion?" said the Queen.

"Madam," replied the youth, "though exheridated and disowned, I am yet a Douglas: with most of yonder nobles my family have been in feud for ages—a cold reception amongst them were an insult, and a kind one yet more humiliating."

"For shame, Douglas," replied the Queen, "shake off this unmanly gloom! I can make thee match for the best of them in title and fortune, and, believe me, I will. Go then amongst them, I command you."

"That word," said Douglas, "is enough—I go. This only let me say, that not for wealth or title would I have done that which I have done—Mary Stewart will not, and the Queen cannot, reward me."

So saying, he left the oratory, mingled with the nobles, and placed himself at the bottom of the table. The Queen looked after him, and put her kerchief to her eyes.

"Now, Our Lady pity me," she said, "for no sooner are my prison cares ended, than those which beset me as a woman and a queen again thicken around me. Happy Elizabeth! to whom political interest is everything, and whose heart never betrays thy head. And now must I seek this other boy, if I would prevent daggers-drawing betwixt him and the young Seyton."

XXXII.

Roland Græme was in the same oratory, but at such a distance from Douglas that he could not overhear what passed betwixt the Queen and him. He also was moody and thoughtful, but cleared his brow at the Queen's question, "How now, Roland? you are negligent in your attendance this morning. Are you so much overcome with your night's ride?"

"Not so, gracious madam," answered Græme; "but I am told the Page of Lochleven is not the Page of Niddrie-Castle; and so Master Henry Seyton hath in a manner been pleased to supersede my attendance."

"Now, Heaven forgive me," said the Queen, "how soon these cock-chickens begin to spar!—with children and boys, at least, I may be a queen. I will have you friends. Some one send me Henry Seyton hither." As she spoke the last words aloud, the youth whom she had named entered the apartment. "Come hither," she said, "Henry Seyton—I will have you give your hand to this youth, who so well aided in the plan of my escape."

"Willingly, madam," answered Seyton, "so that the youth will grant me, as a boon, that he touch not the hand of another Seyton whom he knows of. My hand has passed current for hers with him before now—and to win my friendship, he must give up thoughts of my sister's love."

"Henry Seyton," said the Queen, "does it become you to add any condition to my command?"

"Madam," said Henry, "I am the servant of your Grace's throne, son to the most loyal man in Scotland. Our goods, our castles, our blood, are yours: Our honour is in our own keeping. I could say more, but——"

"Nay, speak on, rude boy," said the Queen; "what

avails it that I am released from Lochleven, if I am thus enthralled under the yoke of my pretended deliverers, and prevented from doing justice to one who has deserved as well of me as yourself?"

"Be not in this distemperature for me, sovereign Lady," said Roland; "this young gentleman, being the faithful servant of your Grace, and the brother of Catherine Seyton, bears that about him which will charm down my passion at the hottest."

"I warn thee once more," said Henry Seyton haughtily, "that you make no speech which may infer that the daughter of Lord Seyton can be aught to thee beyond what she is to every churl's blood in Scotland."

The Queen was again about to interfere, for Roland's complexion rose, and it became somewhat questionable how long his love for Catherine would suppress the natural fire of his temper. But the interposition of another person, hitherto unseen, prevented Mary's interference. There was in the oratory a separate shrine, enclosed with a high screen of pierced oak, within which was placed an image of Saint Bennet, of peculiar sanctity. From this recess, in which she had been probably engaged in her devotions, issued suddenly Magdalen Græme, and addressed Henry Seyton, in reply to his last offensive expressions—"And of what clay, then, are they moulded these Seytons, that the blood of the Græmes may not aspire to mingle with theirs? Know, proud boy, that when I call this youth my daughter's child, I affirm his descent from Malise Earl of Strathern, called Malise with the Bright Brand; and I trow the blood of your house springs from no higher source."

"Good mother," said Seyton, "methinks your sanctity should make you superior to these worldly vanities; and indeed it seems to have rendered you somewhat oblivious

touching them, since, to be of gentle descent, the father's name and lineage must be as well qualified as the mother's."

"And if I say he comes by the blood of Avenel by the father's side," replied Magdalen Græme, "name I not blood as richly coloured as thine own?"

"Of Avenel?" said the Queen; "is my page descended of Avenel?"

"Aye, gracious Princess, and the last male heir of that ancient house—Julian Avenel was his father, who fell in battle against the Southron."

"I have heard the tale of sorrow," said the Queen; "it was thy daughter, then, who followed that unfortunate baron to the field, and died on his body? Alas! how many ways does woman's affection find to work out her own misery! The tale has oft been told and sung in hall and bower—And thou, Roland, art that child of misfortune, who was left among the dead and dying? Henry Seyton, he is thine equal in blood and birth."

"Scarcely so," said Henry Seyton, "even were he legitimate; but if the tale be told and sung aright, Julian Avenel was a false knight."

"Now, by Heaven, thou liest!" said Roland Græme, and laid his hand on his sword. The entrance of Lord Seyton, however, prevented violence.

"Save me, my lord," said the Queen, "and separate these wild and untamed spirits."

"How, Henry," said the baron, "are my castle, and the Queen's presence, no checks on thine insolence and impetuosity?—And with whom art thou brawling?—unless my eyes spell that token false, it is with the very youth who aided me so gallantly in the skirmish with the Leslies—Let me look, fair youth, at the medal which thou wearest in thy cap. By Saint Bennet, it is the same!—

Henry, I command thee to forbear him, as thou lovest my blessing—”

“And as you honour my command,” said the Queen; “good service hath he done me.”

“Ay, madam,” replied young Seyton, “as when he carried the billet enclosed in the sword-sheath to Lochleven—marry, the good youth knew no more than a pack-horse what he was carrying.”

“But I who dedicated him to this great work,” said Magdalen Grème—“I, by whose advice and agency this just heir hath been unloosed from her thralldom—I, who spared not the last remaining hope of a fallen house in this great action—I, at least, knew and counselled; and what merit may be mine, let the reward, most gracious Queen, descend upon this youth. My ministry here is ended; you are free—a sovereign Princess, at the head of a gallant army, surrounded by valiant barons—My service could avail you no farther, but might well prejudice you; your fortune now rests upon men’s hearts and men’s swords—May they prove as trusty as the faith of women!”

“You will not leave us, mother,” said the Queen—“you whose practices in our favour were so powerful, who dared so many dangers, and wore so many disguises, to blind our enemies and to confirm our friends—you will not leave us in the dawn of our reviving fortunes, ere we have time to know and to thank you?”

“You cannot know her,” answered Magdalen Grème, “who knows not herself—there are times, when, in this woman’s frame of mind, there is the strength of him of Gath—in this overtoiled brain, the wisdom of the most sage counsellor—and again the mist is on me, and my strength is weakness, my wisdom folly. I have spoken before princes and cardinals—Aye, noble Princess, even before the princes of thine own house of Lorraine; and

I know not whence the words of persuasion came which flowed from my lips, and were drunk in by their ears.— And now, even when I most need words of persuasion, there is something which chokes my voice, and robs me of utterance.”

“If there be aught in my power to do thee pleasure,” said the Queen, “the barely naming it shall avail as well as all thine eloquence.”

“Sovereign Lady,” replied the enthusiast, “it shames me that at this high moment something of human frailty should cling to one, whose vows the saints have heard, whose labours in the rightful cause Heaven has prospered. But it will be thus while the living spirit is shrined in the clay of mortality—I will yield to the folly,” she said, weeping as she spoke, “and it shall be the last.” Then seizing Roland’s hand, she led him to the Queen’s feet, kneeling herself upon one knee, and causing him to kneel on both. “Mighty Princess,” she said, “look on this flower—it was found by a kindly stranger on a bloody field of battle, and long it was ere my anxious eyes saw, and my arms pressed, all that was left of my only daughter. For your sake, and for that of the holy faith we both profess, I could leave this plant, while it was yet tender, to the nurture of strangers—ay, of enemies, by whom, perchance, his blood would have been poured forth as wine, had the heretic Glendinning known that he had in his house the heir of Julian Avenel. Since then I have seen him only in a few hours of doubt and dread, and now I part with the child of my love—for ever—for ever!—Oh, for every weary step I have made in your rightful cause, in this and in foreign lands, give protection to the child whom I must no more call mine!”

“I swear to you, mother,” said the Queen, deeply

affected, "that for your sake and his own, his happiness and fortunes shall be our charge!"

"I thank you, daughter of princes," said Magdalen, and pressed her lips, first to the Queen's hand, then to the brow of her grandson. "And now," she said, drying her tears, and rising with dignity, "Earth has had its own, and Heaven claims the rest.—Lioness of Scotland, go forth and conquer! and if the prayers of a devoted votaress can avail thee, they will rise in many a land, and from many a distant shrine. I will glide like a ghost from land to land, from temple to temple; and where the very name of my country is unknown, the priests shall ask who is the Queen of that distant northern land, for whom the aged pilgrim was so fervent in prayer. Farewell! Honour be thine, and earthly prosperity, if it be the will of God—if not, may the penance thou shalt do here ensure thee happiness hereafter!—Let no one speak or follow me—my resolution is taken—my vow cannot be cancelled."

She glided from their presence as she spoke, and her last look was upon her beloved grandchild. He would have risen and followed, but the Queen and Lord Seyton interfered.

"Press not on her now," said Lord Seyton, "if you would not lose her for ever. Many a time have we seen the sainted mother, and often at the most needful moment; but to press on her privacy, or to thwart her purpose, is a crime which she cannot pardon. I trust we shall yet see her at her need—a holy woman she is for certain, and dedicated wholly to prayer and penance; and hence the heretics hold her as one distracted, while true Catholics deem her a saint."

"Let me then hope," said the Queen, "that you, my lord, will aid me in the execution of her last request."

“What! in the protection of my young second?—cheerfully—that is, in all that your majesty can think it fitting to ask of me.—Henry, give thy hand upon the instant to Roland Avenel, for so I presume he must now be called.”

“And shall be Lord of the Barony,” said the Queen, “if God prosper our rightful arms.”

“It can only be to restore it to my kind protectress, who now holds it,” said young Avenel. “I would rather be landless all my life, than she lost a rood of ground by me.”

“Nay,” said the Queen, looking to Lord Seyton, “his mind matches his birth—Henry, thou hast not yet given thy hand.”

“It is his,” said Henry, giving it with some appearance of courtesy, but whispering Roland at the same time,—“For all this, thou hast not my sister’s.”

“May it please your Grace,” said Lord Seyton, “now that these passages are over, to honour our poor meal. Time it were that our banners were reflected in the Clyde. We must to horse with as little delay as may be.”

[It was the policy of Queen Mary’s party to avoid an engagement with the hostile forces commanded by Murray, Morton, and other leaders who had been trained to war from their youth, until time should have swollen the ranks of her adherents. With this view the royal party marched towards the castle of Dumbarton, where the Queen’s lieges hoped to place her in security, there to await succours from France and the levies which were being made by her adherents in every province of Scotland. Unhappily for Mary, this design was frustrated by the Regent, who intercepted the Queen’s party before they could reach Dumbarton, and forced Seyton and his brother peers to give battle at Langside near Glasgow. The Queen’s forces were utterly routed, and the unfortunate Mary fled to England.]

XXXIII.

Many a bitter tear was shed during the hasty flight of Queen Mary, over fallen hopes, future prospects, and slaughtered friends. The deaths of the brave Douglas, and of the fiery but gallant young Seyton, seemed to affect the Queen as much as the fall from the throne, on which she had so nearly been again seated. Catherine Seyton devoured in secret her own grief, anxious to support the broken spirits of her mistress; and the Abbot, bending his troubled thoughts upon futurity, endeavoured in vain to form some plan which had a shadow of hope. The spirit of young Roland—for he also mingled in the hasty debates held by the companions of the Queen's flight—continued unchecked and unbroken.

"Your majesty," he said, "has lost a battle. Your ancestor, Bruce, lost seven successively ere he sat triumphant on the Scottish throne, and proclaimed with the voice of a victor in the field of Bannockburn the independence of his country. Are not these heaths which we may traverse at will better than the locked, guarded, and lake-moated Castle of Lochleven? We are free—in that one word there is comfort for all our losses."

He struck a bold note, but the heart of Mary made no response.

"Better," she said, "I had still been in Lochleven than seen the slaughter made by rebels among the subjects who offered themselves to death for my sake. Speak not to me of farther efforts—they would only cost the lives of you, the friends who recommend them! I would not again undergo what I felt when I saw from yonder mount the swords of the fell horsemen of Morton raging among the faithful Seytons and Hamiltons for their loyalty to

their Queen. I would not again feel what I felt when Douglas's life-blood stained my mantle for his love to Mary Stewart—not to be empress of all that Britain's seas enclose. Find for me some place where I can hide my unhappy head, which brings destruction on all who love it—it is the last favour that Mary asks of her faithful followers.”

In this dejected mood, but still pursuing her flight with unabated rapidity, the unfortunate Mary, after having been joined by Lord Herries and a few followers, at length halted for the first time at the Abbey of Dundrennan, nearly sixty miles distant from the field of battle. In this remote quarter of Galloway the Reformation not having yet been strictly enforced against the monks, a few still lingered in their cells unmolested; and the Prior, with tears and reverence, received the fugitive queen at the gate of his convent.

“I bring you ruin, my good father,” said the queen as she was lifted from her palfrey.

“It is welcome,” said the prior, “if it comes in the train of duty.”

Placed on the ground, and supported by her ladies, the Queen looked for an instant at her palfrey, which, jaded and drooping its head, seemed as if it mourned the distresses of its mistress.

“Good Roland,” said the Queen whispering, “let Rosabelle be cared for—ask thy heart and it will tell thee why I make this trifling request even in this awful hour.”

She was conducted to her apartment, and in the hurried consultation of her attendants, the fatal resolution of the retreat to England was finally adopted. In the morning it received her approbation, and a messenger was despatched to the English warden to pray him for safe-conduct and hospitality on the part of the Queen of Scotland.

On the next day the Abbot Ambrose walked in the garden of the Abbey with Roland, to whom he expressed his disapprobation of the course pursued. "It is madness and ruin," he said; "better commit herself to the savage Highlanders or wild bordermen than to the faith of Elizabeth. A woman to a rival woman—a presumptive successor to the keeping of a jealous and childless queen!—Roland, Herries is true and loyal, but his counsel has ruined his mistress."

"Ay, ruin follows us everywhere," said an old man with a spade in his hand and dressed like a lay-brother, of whose presence, in the vehemence of his exclamation, the Abbot had not been aware. "Gaze not on me with such wonder! I am he who was the Abbot Boniface at Kennaquhair, who was the gardener Blinkhoolie at Lochleven, hunted round to the place in which I served my noviciate, and now ye are come to rouse me up again! A weary life I have had for one to whom peace was ever the dearest blessing!"

"We will soon rid you of our company, good Father," said the Abbot; "and the Queen will, I fear, trouble your retreat no more."

"Nay, you said as much before," said the querulous old man, "and yet I was put forth from Kinross, and pillaged by troopers on the road. They took from me the certificate that you wot of—that of the Baron—ay, he was a moss-trooper like themselves. You asked me of it, and I could never find it, but they found it—it showed the marriage of—of—my memory fails me. Now see how men differ! Father Nicholas would have told you an hundred tales of the Abbot Ingelram, on whose soul God have mercy! He was, I warrant you, fourscore and six, and I am not more than—let me see—"

"Was not Avenel the name you seek, my good Father?"

said Roland impatiently, yet moderating his tone for fear of alarming or offending the infirm old man.

"Ay, right—Avenel, Julian Avenel. You are perfect in the name. I kept all the special confessions, judging it held with my vow to do so. I could not find it when my successor, Ambrosius, spoke on't—but the troopers found it, and the knight who commanded the party struck his breast till the target clattered like an empty watering-can."

"Saint Mary!" said the Abbot, "in whom could such a paper excite such interest! What was the appearance of the knight, his arms, his colours?"

"Ye distract me with your questions—I dared hardly look at him—they charged me with bearing letters for the Queen, and searched my mail. This was all along of your doings at Lochleven."

"I trust in God," said the Abbot to Roland, who stood beside him shivering and trembling with impatience, "the paper has fallen into the hands of my brother. I heard he had been with his followers on the scout betwixt Stirling and Glasgow. Bore not the knight a holly-bough on his helmet? Canst thou not remember?"

"Oh, remember—remember," said the old man pettishly; "count as many years as I do, if your plots will let you, and see what, and how much, you remember. Why, I scarce remember the pear-mains which I grafted here with my own hands some fifty years since."

At this moment a bugle sounded loudly from the beach.

"It is the death-blast to Queen Mary's royalty," said Ambrosius; "the English warden's answer has been received, favourable doubtless, for when was the door of the trap closed against the prey which it was set for? Droop not, Roland, this matter shall be sifted to the

bottom—but we must not now leave the queen—follow me—let us do our duty, and trust the issue with God. Farewell, good Father, I will visit thee again soon.”

He was about to leave the garden, followed by Roland with half-reluctant steps. The Ex-Abbot resumed his spade.

“I could be sorry for these men,” he said; “ay, and for that poor Queen, but what avail earthly sorrows to a man of fourscore?—and it is a rare dropping morning for the early colewort.”

“He is stricken with age,” said Ambrosius, as he dragged Roland down to the sea-beach; “we must let him take his time to collect himself—nothing now can be thought on but the fate of the Queen.”

XXXIV.

They soon arrived where she stood, surrounded by her little train, and by her side the Sheriff of Cumberland, a gentleman of the house of Lowther, richly dressed, and accompanied by soldiers. The aspect of the Queen exhibited a singular mixture of alacrity and reluctance to depart. Her language and gestures spoke hope and consolation to her attendants, and she seemed desirous to persuade even herself that the step she adopted was secure, and that the assurance she had received of kind reception was altogether satisfactory; but her quivering lip, and unsettled eye, betrayed at once her anguish at departing from Scotland, and her fears of confiding herself to the doubtful faith of England.

“Welcome, my Lord Abbot,” she said, speaking to Ambrosius, “and you, Roland Avenel, we have joyful news for you—our loving sister’s officer proffers us in her name a safe asylum from the rebels who have driven us

from our own—only it grieves me we must here part from you for a short space.”

“Part from us, madam!” said the Abbot. “Is your welcome in England, then, to commence with the abridgment of your train and dismissal of your counsellors?”

“Take it not thus, good Father,” said Mary; “the Warden and the Sheriff, faithful servants of our Royal Sister, deem it necessary to obey her instructions in the present case, even to the letter, and can only take upon them to admit me with my female attendants. An express will instantly be despatched from London, assigning me a place of residence; and I will speedily send to all of you whenever my Court shall be formed.”

“Your Court formed in England! and while Elizabeth lives and reigns?” said the Abbot—“that will be when we shall see two suns in one heaven!”

“Do not think so,” replied the Queen; “we are well assured of our sister’s good faith. Elizabeth loves fame—and not all that she has won by her power and her wisdom will equal that which she will acquire by extending her hospitality to a distressed sister!—not all that she may hereafter do of good, wise, and great, would blot out the reproach of abusing our confidence. Farewell, my page—now my knight—farewell for a brief season. I will dry the tears of Catherine, or I will weep with her till neither of us can weep longer.” She held out her hand to Roland, who, flinging himself on his knees, kissed it with much emotion. He was about to render the same homage to Catherine, when the Queen, assuming an air of sprightliness, said, “Her lips, thou foolish boy! and, Catherine, coy it not—these English gentlemen should see, that, even in our cold clime, Beauty knows how to reward Bravery and Fidelity!”

“We are not now to learn the force of Scottish beauty,

or the mettle of Scottish valour," said the Sheriff of Cumberland, courteously—"I would it were in my power to bid these attendants upon her who is herself the mistress of Scottish beauty, as welcome to England as my poor cares would make them. But our Queen's orders are positive in case of such an emergence, and they must not be disputed by her subject. May I remind your Majesty that the tide ebbs fast?"

The Sheriff took the Queen's hand, and she had already placed her foot on the gangway, by which she was to enter the skiff, when the Abbot, starting from a trance of grief and astonishment at the words of the Sheriff, rushed into the water, and seized upon her mantle.

"She foresaw it!—she foresaw it!"—he exclaimed—"she foresaw your flight into her realm; and, foreseeing it, gave orders you should be thus received. Blinded, deceived, doomed Princess! your fate is sealed when you quit this strand. Queen of Scotland, thou shalt not leave thine heritage!" he continued, holding a still firmer grasp upon her mantle; "true men shall turn rebels to thy will, that they may save thee from captivity or death. Fear not the bills and bows whom that gay man has at his beck—we will withstand him by force. Oh, for the arm of my warlike brother!—Roland Avenel, draw thy sword."

The Queen stood irresolute and frightened; one foot upon the plank, the other on the sand of her native shore, which she was quitting for ever."

"What needs this violence, Sir Priest?" said the Sheriff of Cumberland; "I came hither at your Queen's command, to do her service; and I will depart at her least order, if she rejects such aid as I can offer. No marvel is it if our Queen's wisdom foresaw that such chance as this might happen amidst the turmoils of your unsettled State; and, while willing to afford fair hospi-

tality to her Royal Sister, deemed it wise to prohibit the entrance of a broken army of her followers into the English frontier."

"You hear," said Queen Mary, gently unloosing her robe from the Abbot's grasp, "that we exercise full liberty of choice in leaving this shore; and, questionless, the choice will remain free to us in going to France, or returning to our own dominions, as we shall determine. Besides, it is too late. Your blessing, Father, and God speed thee!"

"May He have mercy on thee, Princess, and speed thee also!" said the Abbot, retreating. "But my soul tells me I look on thee for the last time."

The sails were hoisted, the oars were plied, the vessel went freshly on her way through the firth, which divides the shores of Cumberland from those of Galloway; but not till the vessel diminished to the size of a child's frigate, did the doubtful, and dejected, and dismissed followers of the Queen cease to linger on the sands; and, long, long could they discern the kerchief of Mary, as she waved the oft-repeated signal of adieu to her faithful adherents, and to the shores of Scotland.

[It was afterwards discovered that Roland was the legitimate son of Julian Avenel, who had been secretly married to Catherine Græme. He was now the acknowledged heir of Sir Halbert Glendinning, upon whose death he was to inherit Avenel Castle. He was eventually united to Catherine Seyton, who, after serving her mistress faithfully in her English prison for two years, was sent back to Scotland by the order of Elizabeth. Roland's heart had long inclined to the Reformed religion, and after the Abbot's departure for France, and the death of his grandmother in a convent at Cologne, he renounced the Roman Catholic faith. But he and Catherine lived happily together despite their different creeds. The good Abbot Ambrosius died in a French monastery, but his last prayer was that his body and his heart might be buried in Avenel burial-aisle, in the monastery of St. Mary's, that the last Abbot of that celebrated house of devotion might sleep among its ruins.]

A LIST OF THE MORE DIFFICULT WORDS, AND THEIR EXPLANATIONS, &c.

Abye, pp. *abied*, to suffer or atone for. A. Sax. *abiegan*, to pay for.
Aconitum, monk's-hood, a common flowering plant in gardens;
 wolf's-bane.

Adhibit, to give, to apply (in a medical sense); now used only of
 putting a signature to a paper.

Almoner, an officer who gives out the allowances in a monastery,
 hospital, or other institution.

Amadis of Gaul, the hero of a famous prose romance of chivalry.

Amalgamated, united with; blended into one, as two metals.

Amazons, fighting or masculine women; from a fabled nation of
 women in Asia of a very warlike character.

A moi! à moi! mes Français! (Fr.), Help! help! my Frenchmen!

Anabaptist (Gr. *ana*, again, *baptizein*, to baptize), denying infant
 baptism, and insisting on the need for baptism at an adult
 age. In the Middle Ages a sect under this name held
 doctrines destructive of all civil and religious order, and were
 guilty of many outrages.

Ancestress of your own, Catherine Douglas, who in this way bravely
 tried to defend James I. when he was assassinated at Perth
 in 1437.

Apostacy, departure from one's principles or party. Gr. *apostasia*,
 a standing away from.

Apostrophizing, addressing aside or by a sudden change in the
 conversation. Gr. *apo*, from, *strophē*, a turning.

Aquavitæ (Lat. water of life, Fr. *eau de vie*), a familiar name for
 any sort of distilled spirits.

Ascribe, to set down or to. Lat. *ad*, to, *scribo*, to write.

Astuciously, cunningly, shrewdly. Lat. *astus*, craft.

Avenel. In chap. xxiii. of the *Monastery*, of which the *Abbot* is a
 continuation, Sir Walter Scott describes at some length the
 buildings and surroundings of the supposed Castle of Avenel.

- Babylon, King of, Nebuchadnezzar, see Dan. iv. 31-33.
- Banders, those who band or associate with others.
- Bane, to poison, to ruin. A. Sax. *bana*, destruction, death.
- Barb (contracted from *Barbary*), a horse of the Barbary breed introduced into Spain, remarkable for its endurance and docility.
- Barony, the territory or lordship of a baron.
- Baton, a staff or club, a badge of office.
- Bellona, the Roman goddess of war.
- Bennarty, a flat-topped hill in Kinross-shire, one mile south of Lochleven.
- Bilboa blade, a rapier, a sword; so called from Bilboa in Spain, where the best were made.
- Bird-bolt, an arrow used for shooting birds.
- Black-lettered, printed with letters of the Old English or Gothic form, which were used in the early days of printing.
- Blairstown, a small town and parish in the north-east of Perthshire.
- Bothwell, Earl of, James Hepburn, the third husband of Queen Mary.
- Bower, a lady's chamber. A. Sax. *búr*.
- Branle, a kind of dance. Fr. *branler*, to shake.
- Bravade, a boastful saying, a brag. (Fr.)
- Breach of honour, betrayal, violation of duty.
- Brent, lofty, smooth, unwrinkled. A. Sax. *brant*, steep.
- Broken clan, a clan who had no chief able to find security for their good behaviour,—a clan of outlaws.
- Brook, to bear, to endure.
- Buckler, a kind of shield anciently worn on the left arm.
- Burgess, an inhabitant of a burgh, a citizen or freeman of a burgh. Fr. *bourgeois*, from *bourg*, a burgh.
- Busked, dressed, prepared, adorned.
- Buttery, an apartment in a large house where wines, liquors, and provisions are kept.
- Cabal, a court intrigue, a state secret.
- Calvinistic heresy, the doctrines of the Reformation, taught by Calvin and Knox.
- Cantharides, the insects known under the name of Spanish or blistering fly.

Capitulation, act of surrendering to an enemy on certain terms or conditions. Low Lat. *capitula*, to arrange in heads.

Carabine, a short gun used principally by cavalry soldiers.

Carberry Hill, a hill near Musselburgh where Queen Mary surrendered to the Scottish lords, who conducted her first to Edinburgh and afterwards sent her to Lochleven Castle.

Cart-avers, cart-horses. (Scotch.)

Carthusian silence. The Carthusian order of monks was noted for the severity of its rules. They dared not leave their cells except to go to church, nor speak to any person without leave.

Cates, rich dainty foods, delicacies. O. Eng. *acates*, provisions purchased.

Catherine of Medicis, queen of Henry II. of France, and mother of Francis II., Mary's first husband. She was gifted with both beauty and talents, of elegant manners, a patron of science and art, but unscrupulous in her ambition and extravagant in her administration of public affairs.

Catholicon, a remedy for all diseases. (Greek.)

Chaplet, a garland or wreath to be worn on the head. O. Fr. *chapel*, Mod. Fr. *chapeau*, a hat.

Chastelar, a Frenchman of good birth, distinguished as a poet and a player on the lute. Presuming on the queen's fondness for him, his attentions to her became grossly troublesome, and for this he was tried and executed at St. Andrews in 1563.

Coif, a close-fitting cap or head-dress. Fr. *coiffe*.

Coil, perplexities, tumult, turmoil.

Colewort, cabbage. A. Sax. *caul*, Scot. *kale*, *kail*, and A. Sax. *wyrt*, an herb.

Collation, a light repast, originally applied to the light meal partaken of in monasteries after the reading of the collection or collation of the lives of the fathers of the Church. Lat. *col* for *con*, together, and *fero*, *latum*, to carry.

Confect, a mixture or compound, a make-up. Lat. *confectum*, prepared.

Corpse-candle, a name for will-o'-the-wisp or *ignis fatuus*. It was supposed to foretell death, and by its course to show the road the corpse would be borne.

Courcelles, Monsieur de, French ambassador.

Cruzuedor, the name of an old coin; the Portuguese crusado, so

called from having the cross stamped on it, is of the value of 2s. 9d.

Cubiculars, attendants on a bed-chamber. Lat. *cubiculum*, a sleeping-room.

Curch, an inner linen cap worn by women.

Curfew (Fr. *couvre-feu*, cover-fire), a bell rung in the evening, in olden times, as a signal for people to put out their fires. The custom of ringing the bell is still kept up in some places.

Cyprus, a thin transparent black stuff, a kind of crape.

Darnley. Henry Stuart, Lord Darnley, son of the Earl of Lennox, and Mary's cousin. The queen fell in love with the handsome but foolish young man, and they were married in 1565.

Defection, a falling away, particularly the act of abandoning a cause to which one is bound by duty. Lat. *defectio*, a failing.

Deft, dexterous, spruce, elegant. A. Sax. *dæft*, fit.

Delict, in Scots law a misdemeanour, a crime. Lat. *delictum*, a fault of omission.

Demitted, resigned, transferred. Lat. *de*, down, *mitto*, to send.

Des Rodomontades Espagnoles, the name of a collection of Spanish romances.

Diagnostics, the signs or symptoms by which any particular disease is known. (Greek.)

Dink, to dress, to adorn. (Scotch.)

Dishevelled, hanging negligently and uncombed, said of the hair.

Distemperature, disturbance or trouble of mind.

Donjon-keep, the principal tower in ancient castles. Its lower part was commonly used as a prison.

Doublet, a close-fitting garment covering the body from the neck to a little below the waist.

Draphane Castle, situated a few miles from Lanark, near the junction of the river Nethan with the Clyde. Now called Craignethan Castle, and the original of Sir Walter Scott's Tillietudlem Castle.

Dunbarton, a town on the Clyde, near which stands the isolated rock on which is built the castle so famous in Scottish history.

Dundrennan Abbey, a ruined Cistercian abbey founded in 1142, in the parish of Rerwick, Kirkcudbrightshire.

Duress, imprisonment or threats intended to compel a person to do some act. O. Fr. *duresse*, hardship, constraint.

Earth-damp, a mist rising out of the ground.

Eaves-dropping, listening to catch what is said, as if standing under the eaves or projecting roof of a house.

Emissary, one sent on a private business, a secret agent. Lat. *e*, *ex*, out, *mitto*, to send.

Envoy, a messenger. Fr. *envoyer*, to send; Lat. *in*, in, *via*, a way. Espial, a spy.

Essay (v.), to try, to attempt; (n.), a trial, an assay or test of the qualities of a thing.

Estates, the governing powers of the realm; the parliament.

Esthonia, a district of Russia bordering on the Gulf of Finland.

Evangel, the gospel, as preached by the Reformers.

Exheridated, disinherited, excluded from inheriting. Lat. *ex*, out of, *heres*, an heir.

Ex oribus parvulorum, Lat. out of the mouths of babes; a reference to Psalm viii. 2.

Fals. This encounter took place in the vicinity of Borthwick Castle, Edinburghshire.

Falconet, an ancient small cannon.

Farthingale, a hoop petticoat.

Fatalist, one who believes that all things happen by unavoidable necessity.

Fell, cruel, barbarous, inhuman, bloody. (A. Sax.)

Flodden, grandfather at. James IV., grandfather of Queen Mary, who was killed along with the flower of the Scottish nobility at the battle of Flodden, fought in 1513 with the English under the Earl of Surrey.

Forefend, to hinder or forbid. Eng. *fore* for *for*, Lat. *fendo*, to ward.

Foughten, an old English and Scotch form of *fought*.

Frack, Frackest, ready, eager, forward, most forward. A form of *frank*.

Francis, infirm, the Dauphin and afterwards Francis II. of France, Mary's first husband, who was weakly in body and mind.

French Paris, Nicholas Hubert, a Frenchman long in the employment of Bothwell, and taken into the queen's service shortly

before the murder of Darnley, in which deed he rendered important assistance.

Galliard, a lively dance.

Galloway, a district in the south of Scotland comprising the counties of Kirkcudbright and Wigton.

Galopin, a servant for the kitchen, a cook's boy; so called from being made to run messages. Fr. *galoper*, to gallop.

Gambadoes, gaiters for covering the legs when riding or walking in muddy roads. It. *gamba*, the leg.

Gauntleted, wearing a gauntlet or iron glove with fingers covered with small plates, a part of ancient armour.

Gear, business, matter, affair. A. Sax. *gearwe*, equipments.

Geneva, church of, the Protestant church, as established at Geneva by John Calvin.

Ghostly, spiritual, relating to the soul. A. Sax. *gðst*, a spirit.

Grand-dame, grandmother.

Gratuity, a gift, a present. Lat. *gratus*, pleasing, agreeable.

Guerdon, a reward, recompense. (Old Fr.)

Guise, outward appearance, dress, garb.

Guisian Stock. Queen Mary was granddaughter of Claude, Duke of Guise; some of the members of that family distinguished themselves by their hostility and cruelty to the Protestants.

Gunwale, the upper edge of a boat's side.

Halberdier, one who is armed with a halberd, a combination of a spear and battle-axe.

Harquebuss, a kind of firearm resembling a musket anciently used.

Hawick, a town in Roxburghshire.

Hazel, of a light-brown colour like the hazel-nut.

Head-tire, dress or attire for the head.

Henry, murder of, that is Henry Darnley, Mary's husband, who was murdered at Kirk-of-Field.

Hepburn, the family name of the Earl of Bothwell.

Heretic, a Protestant; one who does not submit to the teachings of the Roman Catholic Church.

Hermitage Castle, an ancient stronghold in Roxburghshire.

Herries, Lord, John Maxwell, a Protestant and devoted supporter of Mary's cause, although his name appears in the bond which sanctions Bothwell's marriage with the queen.

Holland, Sir John, a priest living in the later part of the fifteenth century, the author of a curious allegorical poem called "The Buke of the Howlat" (Book of the Owl). "Sir John" was in former times a common title for a priest.

Holyrood, the palace in Edinburgh of the kings of Scotland.

Homage, respect, regard, deference.

Huntly, a powerful noble family in the north of Scotland.

Instrument, a writing containing the terms of a contract.

Islet, a small island, used of the little island in Lochleven on which Mary was imprisoned.

Jack, a kind of military coat covered with leather, worn over a coat of mail.

James III., killed at Sauchieburn in 1488, fighting against his rebellious nobles.

Jennet, a small Spanish horse. Properly *genet*, from Old Sp. *ginete*, a horse.

Jesuitical, pertaining to the Jesuits or their principles or arts; designing, cunning, deceitful.

Jezebel, a name applied to a wicked abandoned woman, resembling in character the wife of Ahab as described in the first Book of Kings.

Kelpie, an imaginary spirit of the waters.

Kennaquhair, a fictitious name used by Sir Walter Scott for Melrose.

Kent, propel the boat by pushing with a long pole against the bottom of the loch.

Kingdom of Fife, a popular name for Fifeshire, which in remote times comprised a large part of the country between the Tay and the Forth, and formed an important portion of the Pictish kingdom.

Kinross, the name of a small inland county of Scotland, surrounded by Fife and Perth shires, and containing Lochleven, on the west end of which stands the county town Kinross.

Kinsman, near, a man nearly related, one of the same family.

Kirk-of-Field, the house near Edinburgh in which Lord Darnley was placed when recovering from illness, and after his removal from Glasgow in 1567. It was blown up by gunpowder, and

the dead body of Darnley found in the garden, with marks of violence but none of fire upon it.

Knapscap, a head-piece, a sort of helmet.

Knosp, an ornament resembling a bud. Ger. *knospe*, a bud.

La Cronique d'Amour, The Chronicle of Love.

La Mer des Histoires, a large chronicle or universal history continued to the death of Louis XI. of France, 1483.

Labyrinth, a confused entangled mass.

Langside, a village in the county of Renfrew, about two miles south of Glasgow cross, where the troops of Queen Mary were defeated by those under the Regent Murray in 1568.

Lauder, a small town in Berwickshire, on the river Leader.

Leech, an old name for a doctor; a physician, one versed in the art of healing.

Lennox, him of the, Lord Darnley, the queen's deceased husband, who was the son of the Earl of Lennox.

Lepus marinus, Latin name for the *sea-hare*, a kind of shell-fish.

Lethargy, unnatural drowsiness, from which a person can scarcely be awaked. Gr. *lēthē*, oblivion.

Lieges, subjects of a king or queen, persons owing obedience to a superior.

Limned, drew or painted.

Lindesay, Lord, one of the reforming lords, who conducted Mary to her prison, and took an active share in the proceedings against her.

Livonia, a district of Russia bordering on the Baltic Sea.

Load-star, or *lode-star*, any star which serves to lead or guide, especially the pole-star in the north. A.Sax. *lād*, a course, a way.

Lochleven Castle, the prison of the queen, was built on a small island in the loch. It was at one time a royal residence, and was granted by Robert III. to a Douglas.

Lomond Hills, the highest hills in Fifeshire; they reach the height of 1720 feet.

Lorraine, House of, the first Duke of Guise, grandfather of Queen Mary, was a younger son of René II., Duke of Lorraine.

Low Countries, the Netherlands, the country now known as Holland.

Ma bonne, my good girl.

Ma mignône, my darling.

Ma petite mignône, my little darling.

Machiavel (Niccolo Machiavelli), an Italian statesman and historian who lived in the early part of the sixteenth century. He maintained that all means, whether good or bad, may be used to establish the authority of a ruler over his subjects.

Mail, a bag, a bundle.

Mail-gardener, one who raises garden produce for sale.

Malapert, bold, forward, saucy, impudent.

Manor, a lordship or barony held by a lord, an estate.

Marys, the four attendants and intimate companions of the queen, viz. Mary Livingston, daughter of Lord Livingston; Mary Fleming, daughter of Lord Fleming; Mary Seton, daughter of Lord Seton; and Mary Beaton, daughter of Beaton of Balfour.

Masque, a festive entertainment in which the company wear masques or covers for the face.

Massy-more, the dungeon of a prison or castle.

Master Elias Henderson, the chaplain of Lochleven Castle.

May, month of, Mary was married to Bothwell on the 15th of May, 1567.

Medicament, anything used for healing diseases or wounds, a medicine.

Mediciner, a physician.

Melville, Sir Robert, a brother of Sir James Melville; he is not considered to have been faithful to his royal mistress Mary.

Men-quellers, slayers of men, murderers.

Menzie, domestics, servants, household attendants.

Metoposcopical, relating to the art or science of discovering the character of men by their features. Gr. *metōpon*, the forehead, *skopeo*, to view.

Minion, an unworthy favourite, a creature, a term of reproach.

Mirror of Knighthood, a romance of chivalry, a popular book in former times.

Moabitish woman, a woman of the idolatrous tribe of Moab; see Num. xxv.

Monsieur, the common title of respect in France, answering to the English *Mr.*

Morton, Earl of, James Douglas, one of the reforming lords, an able but cruel man, who took a leading part in the events of Queen Mary's time. He became regent of the kingdom in (302)

1572, and was executed in 1581 for his share in the murder of Lord Darnley.

Moss-trooper, the usual name given to the marauders upon the borders of England and Scotland before the union of the two kingdoms. So called from the mosses or bogs so common in the Borders.

Murray, Earl of, James Stuart, natural son of Queen Mary's father James V. by Margaret daughter of Lord Erskine, the Lady of Lochleven. He held a foremost place in Scottish affairs during this period, and was appointed regent after the forced abdication of Mary in 1567. In 1570 he was assassinated by Hamilton of Bothwellhaugh whilst riding in state through the town of Linlithgow.

Necromancer, one who practises sorcery, a wizard, one who holds pretended communication with the dead. Gr. *nekros*, dead, *manteia*, divination.

Niddrie, standing midway between Edinburgh and Linlithgow, now the property of Lord Hopetoun.

Nightpiece, a picture representing some night scene.

Nonce, present occasion or purpose; the same word as *once*.

Nostrum, a medicine the ingredients of which are kept secret, a quack medicine. L. *nostrum*, ours, that is, our own special medicine.

Noviciate, the period of trial before taking on one the vows of a religious order. Lat. *novitius*, new, fresh.

Opium, the juice of the white poppy, a powerful narcotic and valuable medicine.

Oratory, a place for prayer or worship.

Orkney, Duke of, a title of the Earl of Bothwell.

Palfrey, a small horse fit for ladies.

Parterres, flower-beds connected together with spaces of gravel or turf for walking in. Fr. *par*, on, *terre*, the earth.

Partisan, a kind of halbert or pike.

Partlet, a ruff; a band or collar for the neck, worn by women.

Par voie du fait, by means of violence. (French.)

Pear-mains, a name given to several varieties of apple.

Pennon, a small pointed flag or streamer formerly carried by knights

attached to their spear or lance, and generally bearing a badge or device.

Petard, an engine of war made of metal, to be loaded with powder and fixed on a plank, formerly used to break gates, barricades, drawbridges, and the like by explosion.

Petronel, a kind of carbine or large horseman's pistol discharged with the stock placed against the breast. Lat. *pectus*, *pectoris*, the breast.

Pharmacopolist, an apothecary, one who sells medicines or makes up doctors' prescriptions. Gr. *pharmakon*, medicine, *poieo*, to sell.

Physiognomist, one skilled in discerning character from the features of the face.

Pickthank, one who does anything to gain favour, a flatterer, a toady.

Pie, the magpie, a bird noted for its power of imitating words.

Pilniewinks, an instrument of torture formerly used, consisting of a board with holes, into which the fingers were thrust and pressed upon with pegs.

Pinkie, **Pinkie-clough**, near Musselburgh on the Forth, where in 1547 the Scots under the Regent Arran were defeated by the English under the Duke of Somerset.

Plain, open, clear, unreserved.

Pomander, a perfume ball, or a mixture of perfumes, formerly carried in the pocket or suspended from the neck or girdle.

Poniard, a small dagger, a pointed weapon for stabbing.

Popinjay, an old name for a parrot: hence, a fop, a coxcomb.

Porringer, a small earthenware or tin vessel out of which children eat their food; a porridge-dish.

Portal, a door or gate.

Postern-gate, a back gate or private entrance. Lat. *post*, behind.

Pothicar, same as *apothecary*.

Premises, circumstances, condition of things.

Proper, belonging to, as one's own.

Pythoress, the priestess of Apollo at his temple at Delphi; hence any woman supposed to have a spirit of divination, a witch.

Quacksalver, one who boasts of his skill in medicines and salves, a quack.

Quarrel-pane, a pane of glass of a square or lozenge shape.

Reeked; emitted smoke.

Religioner, a religionist, an adherent.

Reliquary; a casket in which relics are kept.

Resetter; a receiver; a harbourer.

Rizzio, David, Queen Mary's Italian favourite, who was murdered in Holyrood in 1566.

Rock, a distaff used in spinning; the staff or frame about which flax, wool, &c., is arranged from which the thread is drawn in spinning.

Rosabelle, the name of Queen Mary's favourite riding-horse.

Rosary, a string of beads used by Roman Catholics on which they count their prayers.

St. Elmo; Lights of; a name given to balls of electric fire often seen on dark stormy nights playing about the deck and rigging of a ship. From *St. Elmo*, a corruption of *Erasmus*, an ancient Italian bishop whom sailors in the Mediterranean invoke during a storm.

St. Giles, the patron saint of Edinburgh.

St. Serf's island, a small island near the south end of Lochleven. On it stood in very early times a religious house of the Culdees, dedicated to St. Serf or Servanus.

Schools, the places where the practice of medicine was regularly taught; the colleges.

Scripped, mocked, gibed. (Scotch.)

Scurril, low, mean; offensive, scurrilous.

Scutcheon, a shield for armorial bearings. A contraction for *escutcheon*.

Sear (*v.*), to make hard or insensible, as by burning.

Sebastian, a French servant of Queen Mary's.

Sectaries, those who separate from an established church or from the prevailing denomination of Christians; schismatics.

Seignior, a title of respect equal to *Sir* or *Mr.*

Seneschal, an officer who has charge in the houses of princes and high personages; a steward.

Sequestrated, private; retired, secluded; we now use *sequestered*.

Sewer, one who serves up a feast and arranges the dishes.

Seyton; Catherine, one of the queen's waiting-maids, afterwards married to Roland Græme.

Sheriff, in England the chief officer of the crown in every county or

shire; he is intrusted with the execution of the laws and the preservation of the peace.

Shrewsbury, Countess of, wife of one of Queen Mary's keepers, and with whom she had a bitter quarrel.

Sibyl, a name given by Greek and Roman writers to certain women who were said to be endowed with the spirit of prophecy; a sorceress, a fortune-teller, a witch.

Sign manual, one's name signed to a document, especially a royal signature; a mark.

Sinclair, Oliver, a favourite of James V., and said to be an unworthy one.

Six score years ago, a hundred and twenty years since.

Slips, leashes or strings by which dogs are held; so called from their being so made as to slip or become loose by slackening of the hand.

Sluice (v.), to scour or cleanse.

Spindle, a hanging piece of wood for twisting and winding the fibres drawn from the rock or distaff.

Squire, an attendant on a knight or noble personage, a devoted male attendant on a lady; contracted from *esquire*.

Subscribe, to sign with one's own hand; literally, to write beneath.

Succory, a corruption of *chicory*, the name of a common plant whose roots ground are used as a substitute for or mixed with coffee.

Swart, of a dark colour, black. (A. Sax.)

Sycophant, a mean flatterer, especially of princes and great people.

Sylph, an imaginary being inhabiting the air, and holding a place intermediate between material and immaterial beings.

Target, a small shield or buckler used as a defensive weapon in war, also a mark for shooting at.

Tenets, opinions, principles, or doctrines which one believes or maintains to be true. Lat. *tenet*, he holds.

Teutonic Knights, anciently, knights belonging to the German or Teutonic races.

Throgmorton, (Sir Nicholas), Queen Elizabeth's ambassador to Scotland.

Thumbikins, instruments of torture for squeezing the thumbs.

Tires, head-dress.

Tire-woman, one whose occupation is to attend to the dressing of her mistress, a lady's-maid.

- Torpor, loss of motion or the power of motion, numbness.
- Tour de jongleur, juggler's trick. (French.)
- Traits, distinguishing or peculiar points in the features or the character of a person. Fr. *trait*, a stroke.
- Transmute, to change from one form into another, to transform.
Lat. *trans*, across, *muto*, to change.
- Tremors, trembling, shivering, or shaking.
- Trow ye, think ye, believe ye. A. Sax. *treowan*, to believe.
- Tutelar, having the charge of protecting a person or thing. Lat. *tueor*, to defend.
- Two matrons at the deserted nunnery. This refers to the manner in which Roland was first introduced to Catherine Seyton. One of the matrons was Magdalen Græme, Roland's grandmother.
- Valetudinary, one sickly, in a poor state of health.
- Van, the front of an army or of a company; shortened from *vanguard*.
- Vasquine, a kirtle or petticoat. (French.)
- Vender, a seller, a dispenser. Lat. *rendo*, to sell.
- Vertugardins, the French name for hoop petticoats.
- Vestibule, a passage or small chamber next the outer door of a house, a porch, a lobby.
- Wimple, a covering of silk, linen, or other material, laid in plaits over the head and round the chin, formerly worn by women out of doors.

LISTS OF WORDS FOR SPELLING.

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ad-her'-ence
re-lig'-ion
es-pe'-cial-ly
mar'-riage
re-bel'-lion
com-pul'-so-ry
ab-di-ca'-tion
par-tic'-u-lars
in'-ci-dents
cir'-cu-lat-ed
mis-car'-ried

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cir'-cum-stanc-es
ret'-i-nue
as-sist'-ance
hos'-tel-ry
re-ceived'
il-lus'-tri-ous
ex-plained'
fi-del'-i-ty
com-mu-ni-ca'-tion
an'-cient
oc'-cu-pies
isl'-and
cen'-tre
re-called'
nur'-tured
a-dorned'
sev'-er-al
isl'-ets
fort'-ress
sit'-u-at-ed
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em-bo'-somed
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de-scent'

sur-round'-ed
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fer'-tile
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all'-gles
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des'-o-late
se-clu'-sion
se-ques'-trat-ed
pre-sides'
es-cape'
ex'-er-cise
reached
dis-played'
pen'-non
re-peat'-ed-ly
clam'-or-ous
bus'-ied
un-moor'-ing
com-pan'-ion
pro-ceed'
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thread'-bare
cloak
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harsh'-ly

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quay

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do-mes'-tic
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in-ter-rupt'-ed
re-sist'-ance
ne'-ces-si-ty
re-mon'-strance
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il-le-git'-i-mate
sub'-se-quent-ly
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ob-nox'-i-ous
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in-ter'-ro-gat-ed
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mel'-an-cho-ly

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ac-com'-plish-ments
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im-a-gin-a'-tion
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por'-traits
dis-crep'-an-cy
pos-sess'-es
ac-know'-ledg-es
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chi'-al-rous
hor'-ri-ble
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af-fec'-tion-ate
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scru'-pu-lous
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af-fec-ta'-tion
aus-tere'
ap-prised'
an-nun-ci-a'-tion
con-demned'
gib'-bet-ed
par'-ley-ing
in'-ter-view
au'-di-ence
ad-dress'-ing

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at-tend'-ance
suite

as-signed'
ex-claimed'

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al-ter'-nate-ly
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un-ri'-valled
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ves'-ti-bule
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pre-sump'-tion
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de-scrip'-tion
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